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# *Jerusalem to Rome*

Charles Fremont Sitterly











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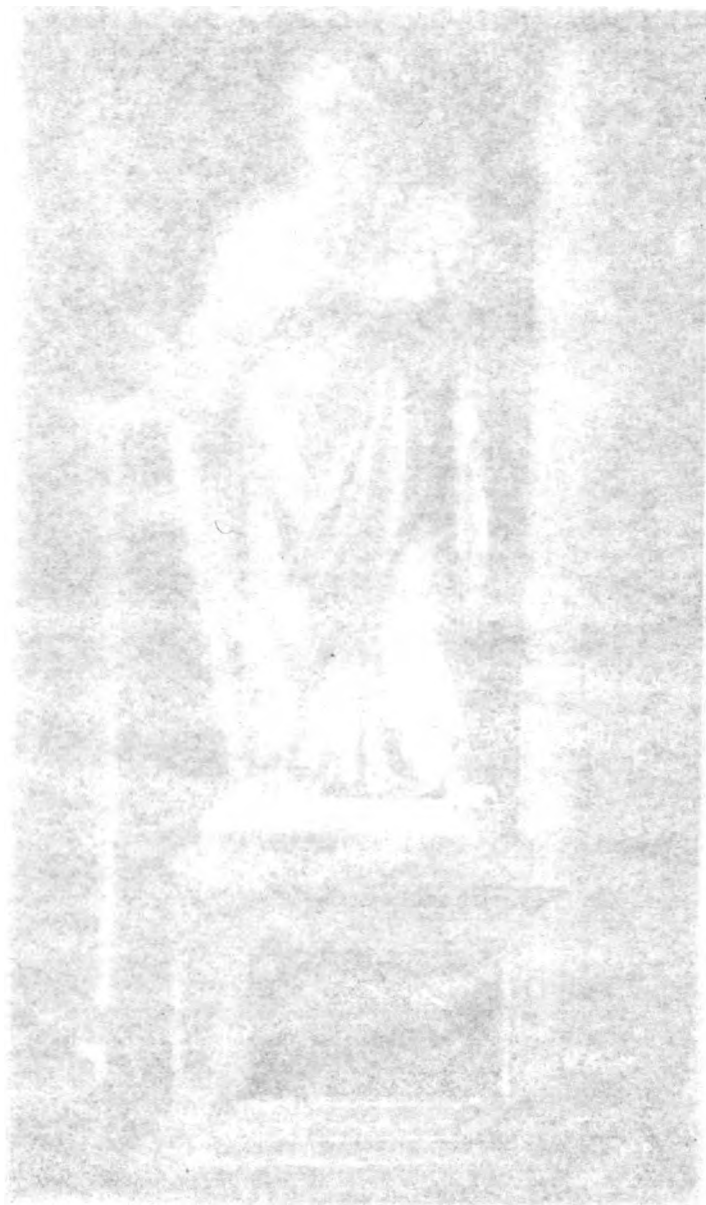
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STATUE OF PAUL





# **JERUSALEM TO ROME**

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## **The Acts of the Apostles**

**A NEW TRANSLATION  
AND COMMENTARY**

**WITH INTRODUCTION, MAPS, RECONSTRUCTIONS AND  
ILLUSTRATIONS FROM CHRISTIAN ART**

✓  
BY

**CHARLES FREMONT SITTERLY**

PROFESSOR IN DREW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Author of *Praxis in the Manuscripts of the Greek Testament* and  
*The Canon, Text, and Manuscripts of the New Testament*

1861 —



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IN MEMORY  
OF MY STUDENT TRAVELS AND RESIDENCE  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN  
1890-1892  
AND WITH SINCERE  
AFFECTION FOR THE VITAL  
PERSONALITY AND CHRISTLIKE SPIRIT  
OF PROFESSOR DOCTOR  
BERNHARD WEISS



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## PREFACE

THIS book is a book of Acts; not of theories nor speculations, nor even of creeds, but of facts, of realities, of conquests, of travels, of preaching put at once into practice, of faith that works.

After the Gospels, the Acts is the most fascinating book of the Bible. It is historical drama, with all the appealing power of such literature. The stage is the Roman empire. The scenes fall in the homes, market places, highroads, sea-lanes, temple precincts, and law courts of every province and chief city from Judæa to the Capital. The actors include every social stratum from the lowest slave-girl to the Emperor himself, bringing forward kings, queens, prelates, soldiers, sailors, dyers, weavers, smiths, dagger-men, beggars, thieves, outlaws, magicians, mobs, and, above all, hosts of good, pious, plain people, and some saints. The time covers a single generation, that immediately following the crucifixion, from 30 to 63 A. D.

The book has been discussed, dissected, and critically examined so completely in recent days that it is in some danger of being buried beneath the tradition of the elders, not to say neophytes, of biblical criticism. As Professor Richard G. Moulton says of the Bible as a whole, "There still remains one thing to be done, namely, to read it." Forasmuch as many have taken in hand the task of translating the New Testament into vernacular English, it seemed good to me also to make a contribution of this sort for two reasons: first, because it is only in our day



that the Greek Text of the New Testament, and especially of Acts, has become settled; and, second, because we are in an epoch of new translations, and this one is offered as a specimen of what may be done toward feeling after, if possibly we may find, a common version in English for coming generations. Professor Alexander Souter's admirable text (Oxford, 1910) is our basis.

In order to let the reader, like noble Theophilus, enjoy the native power and simplicity of the work, we have cut the cords of mediæval versification and numbering and given the translation, with larger type, the place of honor on the right-hand page, as in Codex Beza. We have also freed the commentary from much material of a miscellaneous kind, condensing and presenting it in the form of lists and tables in the Introduction, thus making possible a certain continuity and directness to the comments.

For illustration, we have selected a few of the best things in Christian art touching upon the story, and have had reconstructions made of the six chief centers about which the action revolves—Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, and Rome—where Christ and the New Way displaced in turn Moses and the Law, Apollo and License, Diana and Nature-worship, Minerva and Earthly Wisdom, Venus and Sensualism, and Mars and Military Might.

CHARLES FREMONT SITTERLY.

Drew Theological Seminary,

Madison, New Jersey,

Midsummer,

1915

# I

## INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

### I. BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK

THE world was aimlessly wandering across the trackless marshes of time at the midnight of human history. Even the Jews, the one nation possessing the Torch of Truth, had overlaid it with a pall of tradition, and lost the Way. The Greeks had philosophized every phase of thought and life, and had deified every virtue and vice, until for them there was nothing new. The Romans, in addition, had deified first their Capital and then the Emperor, and in the name of both had conquered all lands, so that there was the peace of exhaustion over the whole world.

Thus man's extremity becomes the divine opportunity, and Christ, the Way for the Jews, the Wisdom for the Greeks, and the Power for the Romans, appears as Redeemer, Teacher, and King, and brings Life and Immortality to Light. The Way is so plain, the Light is so bright, and the Life so abundant that once realized He can never be lost again, and the one supreme business of men is henceforth to witness to and proclaim Him unto the ends of the earth. The author of Acts had experienced this transforming truth and given himself and his talents to this business. His dear friend and patron, Theophilus, had shared his joy, and to him Luke dedicates both his books of treasured miscellany gathered through many years of loving research and travels.

Both books are built about the same two dominant ideas,

which spring out of the above facts. First, Jesus the Nazarene is the Anointed Son of God Most High. He is endowed with all power in His own right and as setting forth the undivided mind of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Having ended the period of His earthly humiliation and suffering, making plain thereby the way of salvation for sinful men, He has ascended to the highest heaven and does administer and through the Holy Spirit will administer mercy, righteousness, and truth to the end of the ages. Second, this Christ, though fulfilling to the letter every promise made of Messiah, is not alone the Saviour of the Jews, be they Hebrew-born or heathen proselytes, but He is the only and abundant hope of universal redemption without let or limitation of sex, race, land, epoch, or social status.

## 2. THE AUTHOR AND HIS SOURCES

From every standpoint the opinion is valid that Luke, the beloved physician and friend of Paul (Col. iv, 14), was the writer of Acts. The fact that the author makes no use of the Pauline Epistles, and yet without design coincides with them in countless points, shows that he was almost always a member of Paul's company. The remarkable accuracy as well as peculiarity of the book in matters pertaining to the government of various Roman provinces, including the islands, and in those of topography and racial characteristics, again go well with Lukan authorship. Luke was not a Jew (Col. iv, 11) but probably a Greek, and belonged to the second generation, not knowing Jesus according to the flesh (Luke i, 2). Quite possibly he was converted under the preaching of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, as his friend Theophilus appears, in early tradition, to belong there, and Luke's

book takes up the narrative from the transfer of interest to Antioch with fuller detail and indications not infrequent of the testimony of an eyewitness. All of the "we" passages, including that of xiv, 22, fall in this half of the book. We therefore have in Paul and Luke himself the source of the larger part of Acts. For the first twelve chapters Peter, Philip, Barnabas, Mark, and James the Lord's brother are first-class and all-sufficient sources, and Luke had abundant opportunity for consulting these as well as others of the Judæan circle.

### 3. THE PURPOSE OF THE AUTHOR

Having traced from the beginning the life of his Lord until His Ascension in the first volume, it is clear that Luke's purpose in the book before us is to continue the narrative unbroken, showing how the Saviour, though ascended, continued active and dominant in guiding, inspiring, and protecting His followers in their work of spreading the news of the Gospel as far as their influence or power could be felt. The program is furnished by the Commander as He withdraws from sight. The power promised for its execution is at once fully given from on high. His spiritual presence is clearly manifest at every critical turn; courage, wisdom, diplomatic and dialectic adroitness, such as daunts Sanhedrins, Councils, and every form of organized persecution, mark the men of hitherto ordinary spirit and address, while everywhere their enemies take knowledge that they have learned of Jesus, and apparently propose to bring "this man's blood" afresh upon that generation. The leaders themselves attribute their power and boldness in every case to the mind and touch of the Master. Miracle is as plentiful and employed for precisely the same ends here as in the

Gospels, and to ignore or deny it is to do violence both to the spirit and letter of every page. The living, reigning Christ is the sole and sufficient key to the Acts and actors here brought forward, though but very few of either are mentioned out of a vast background of both which soon filled Egypt and all North Africa, Parthia and all the East, as fully as the provinces of Asia Minor, Greece, and all the West. The book at best is but a sketch, boldly and artistically drawn, but still a sketch, tracing in barest outline some of the experiences, teachings, and travels of two of the greatest men of that or, indeed, of any age. Peter and Paul are the foci about which everything turns. Other of the artist's favorites, like Barnabas, Stephen, and Philip, are but understudies to these, and the multitudes behind them but lay figures. Finally, Peter, having played his part, gives way to the master Strategist, Advocate, and Organizer of early Christianity.

#### 4. LITERARY STYLE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK

The author's style is identical with that of the writer of the Third Gospel, more than fifty words being common to these two books not elsewhere used in the New Testament. Moreover, these literary characteristics are as true of the "we" passages as of the other portions of the book.

The introduction and dedication are the same, and where the writer speaks for himself he writes like a native Greek, and in the best idiom of the New Testament. The Acts opens with the Ascension, an account of which is elsewhere given only at the end of Luke's Gospel. The author introduces documentary data in the same way, with long reports of speeches, hymns, prayers, and official decrees. He has the same deep interest in women,

and in matters concerning Samaria, the same genuine compassion for the poor, and the same peculiar accuracy in the use of medical language, common to both books. This group of data is sufficient in itself to prove the point, as Hobart and Harnack abundantly show. Of the same sort is the marked appeal to the author of both books of spiritual phenomena, both angelic and demoniacal. The personality and presence of the Holy Spirit and of the Angel of the Lord, the prominence of trance and of heavenly vision, and the use of the word "power" absolutely and as an attribute, are also of unique significance. The frequent and full references to the hold of magic, ventriloquism, charms, and various forms of necromancy, and in particular the burning of such paraphernalia and books in the market place of Ephesus, the well-known world center of such interests in the first century, also go well with the personality and interest of Luke as with that of no other writer of the New Testament canon.

## 5. CHRONOLOGICAL FEATURES

### a. THE TIME OF THE ACTION, WITH CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF THE ACTS

As stated in the Preface, the time covered in the book lies between A. D. 30 and 63. In one brief generation the campaign of the Empire in the name of its new Sovereign was carried out in full, and we have no doubt that in addition to the record here given five years more were enough for Peter to carry it to Parthia on the East as Paul did to Spain on the West.

In view of the abundant data as to the time element in the Acts, and remembering the difference in methods of



its measurement as between Hebrew and Roman, we have constructed the following schedule of approximate dates:

### CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF THE ACTS

	CHAPTER	A. D.
1. The Ascension of Christ.....	I	May 18, 30.
2. The Descent of the Holy Spirit.....	II	May 28, 30.
3. The First Outbreak of Persecution.....	IV	Spring, 31.
4. The Election of Deacons.....	VI	Spring, 32.
5. The Martyrdom of Stephen.....	VII	Spring, 33.
6. The Great Persecution Following.....	VIII	Summer, 33.
7. The Preaching of Philip at Samaria.....	VIII	Summer, 33.
8. Paul's Conversion at Damascus.....	IX	Autumn, 33.
9. Paul's Visit to Jerusalem.....	IX	Spring, 36.
10. Peter's Tour to Joppa and Cæsarea.....	IX-X	Spring, 40.
11. The Founding of the Church at Antioch.....	XI	Summer, 41.
12. Barnabas Brings Paul from Tarsus.....	XI	Spring, 43.
13. The Famine and Antioch Relief Fund.....	XI	2 Years, 45-47.
14. Martyrdom of James, Son of Zebedee.....	XII	Spring, 44.
15. The Death of Herod Agrippa I.....	XII	Summer, 44.
16. The First Missionary Tour.....	XIII	2 Years, 47-49.
17. Paul's Experiences in Province Galatia.....	XIV	Summer, 47.
18. The Council at Jerusalem.....	XV	Spring, 50.
19. The Second Missionary Tour.....	XV	2 Years, 50-52.
20. Paul Enters Europe.....	XVI	Autumn, 50.
21. Paul's Visit at Athens.....	XVII	Summer, 51.
22. The Third Missionary Tour.....	XVIII	3 Years, 53-56.
23. The Labor Riot at Ephesus.....	XIX	Winter, 56.
24. Paul's Farewell at Miletus.....	XX	Passover, 57.
25. Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem.....	XXI	Pentecost, 57.
26. Paul's Address from the Castle Stairs.....	XXII	Pentecost, 57.
27. Paul's Imprisonment at Cæsarea.....	XXIII	2 Years, 57-59.
28. The Trial Before Felix.....	XXIV	Spring, 57.
29. The Appeal Before Festus.....	XXV	Spring, 59.
30. The Defense Before Herod Agrippa II.....	XXVI	Summer, 59.
31. The Winter Voyage to Malta.....	XXVII	Sept.-Oct., 59.
32. The Arrival at Rome.....	XXVIII	Spring, 60.
33. Paul's Roman Imprisonment.....	XXVIII	2 Years, 60-62.

**b. THE TIME OF WRITING THE BOOK**

It seems better to date the Acts soon after the last event recorded. The air of verisimilitude and freshness so characteristic of it is thus preserved and the difficulty of Luke's utter silence, both here and in his Gospel, concerning the momentous doings which fell at and after the close of Nero's reign, both in Rome and in Jerusalem, is escaped. If either Paul had died or Jerusalem fallen before the author sent forth his book, it seems impossible that either event should have escaped conscious or unconscious implication. On the one hand, Paul is always presented as advancing from one scene of triumph to another, while on the other hand, the vigor of the mother church and the opposition of the Judaizers in Jerusalem, each centering in the Temple courts, upper and lower, never appears in the least abated. Presuming, as we do, that both the Third Gospel and Acts were written, as they pretend to be, for the further enlightenment of Theophilus as to matters he knew in part, the natural view is the rational one, namely, that they were not written widely apart nor either of them later than the decade A. D. 60-70.

**6. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE BOOK****a. PASSAGES REFERRING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The most marked and perhaps important group of phenomena in the Acts is connected with the personality and operations of the Holy Spirit; indeed, the book has sometimes most aptly been called the Acts of the Holy Spirit.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Dominant in the Teachings of the Saviour.....Acts I, 2.
2. Promised by the Saviour to His Followers.....Acts I, 5.
3. Poured Forth upon Them at Pentecost.....Acts II, 4.
4. As Promised in the Prophet Joel.....Acts II, 17.
5. Manifest in Peter's Address to the High Priest..Acts IV, 8.
6. Poured Forth Anew in Answer to Prayer.....Acts IV, 31.
7. Grieved by Ananias.....Acts V, 3.
8. Grieved by Sapphira.....Acts V, 9.
9. A Prime Qualification for the Diaconate.....Acts VI, 3.
10. Fully Manifest in the Character of Stephen.....Acts VI, 5.
11. Rejected of that Generation.....Acts VII, 51.
12. Shining Forth in Stephen's Death.....Acts VII, 55.
13. Prayed for by the Apostles at Samaria.....Acts VIII, 15.
14. Given, in Answer, to the Samaritans.....Acts VIII, 17.
15. Earnestly Coveted by Simon Magus.....Acts VIII, 18.
16. Attempted Purchase by Simon Magus.....Acts VIII, 19.
17. Given to Saul at Damascus.....Acts IX, 17.
18. Poured Out Anew on the Churches of Judæa,  
Galilee, and Samaria.....Acts IX, 31.
19. Referred to as Anointing Jesus with Power....Acts X, 38.
20. Poured Forth on Cornelius and His Family....Acts X, 44.
21. Witnessed with Astonishment by Jews present..Acts X, 45.
22. Made Sufficient Ground for Baptism.....Acts X, 47.
23. Peter's Warrant for the Visit to Cornelius.....Acts XI, 12.
24. Peter's Account of His Outpouring There.....Acts XI, 15.
25. Given in Fulfillment of Christ's Promise.....Acts XI, 16.
26. Barnabas a Man "Full of the Holy Spirit".....Acts XI, 24.
27. Agabus "Instructed by the Holy Spirit".....Acts XI, 28.
28. Dictates Election of the First Missionaries.....Acts XIII, 2.
29. Sends Them to Seleucia and Cyprus.....Acts XIII, 4.
30. Dictates Paul's Rebuke to Elymas.....Acts XIII, 9.
31. Fills the Believers at Antioch of Pisidia.....Acts XIII, 52.
32. Peter's Witness to His Bestowal at Cæsarea....Acts XV, 8.
33. The Council's Conclusion Inspired by Him....Acts XV, 28.
34. Forbids Paul's Preaching in Province Asia....Acts XVI, 6.
35. Forbids Paul's Preaching in Bithynia.....Acts XVI, 7.
36. His Acceptance Necessary on Believing.....Acts XIX, 2.
37. Not Included in John's Baptism.....Acts XIX, 2.
38. Poured Out upon the Twelve at Ephesus.....Acts XIX, 6.
39. The Compelling Motive in Paul's Life.....Acts XX, 22.
40. The Enlightening Guide in Paul's Life.....Acts XX, 23.

41. The Ground of Christian Stewardship.....Acts XX, 28.  
 42. The Inspirer of Agabus's Prophecy.....Acts XXI, 11.  
 43. The Basis of Isaiah's Prophecy.....Acts XXVIII, 25.

#### **b. QUOTATIONS IN THE ACTS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT**

In keeping with the method of the Master, all the great teachers of the New Way make much use of the Old Testament. Eleven different books are referred to in Acts, the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Isaiah having most prominent place. Paul's use of Aratus or Cleanthes in Athens (chapter xvii, 28) is, of course, noteworthy, as is also his reference to an otherwise unknown saying of Jesus (chapter xx, 35). Note also that Stephen quotes from seven books in his single address, aggregating forty separate references.

PERSON	PASSAGE	ACTS CHAPTER
1. Peter.....	Psa. LXIX, 25.....	I, 20.
2. Peter.....	Psa. CIX, 8.....	I, 20.
3. Peter.....	Joel II, 28-32.....	II, 17-21.
4. Peter.....	Psa. XVI, 8-11.....	II, 25-28.
5. Peter.....	Psa. CXXXII, 11.....	II, 30.
6. Peter.....	Psa. CX, 1.....	II, 34-35.
7. Peter.....	Deut. XVIII, 15-19.....	III, 23.
8. Peter.....	Lev. XXIII, 29.....	III, 23.
9. Peter.....	Gen. XII, 3, and XXII, 18.....	III, 25.
10. Peter.....	Psa. CXVIII, 22.....	IV, 11.
11. Ancient Hymn.....	Psa. II, 1-2.....	IV, 25-26.
12. Stephen.....	Gen. XII, 1.....	VII, 3.
13. Stephen.....	Deut. II, 5.....	VII, 5.
14. Stephen.....	Gen. XVII, 8.....	VII, 5.
15. Stephen.....	Gen. XV, 13-14.....	VII, 7.
16. Stephen.....	Exod. III, 12.....	VII, 7.
17. Stephen.....	Gen. XVII, 10.....	VII, 8.
18. Stephen.....	Gen. XXI, 4.....	VII, 8.
19. Stephen.....	Gen. XXXVIII, 11, 28.....	VII, 9.
20. Stephen.....	Gen. XXXIX, 2, 21.....	VII, 9.
21. Stephen.....	Gen. XLI, 37, 40, 43, 55.....	VII, 10.

22. Stephen.....	Psa. CV, 21.....	VII, 10.
23. Stephen.....	Psa. XLI, 54.....	VII, 11.
24. Stephen.....	Gen. XLII, 1.....	VII, 12.
25. Stephen.....	Gen. XLV, 4.....	VII, 13.
26. Stephen.....	Gen. XLV, 9.....	VII, 14.
27. Stephen.....	Gen. XLVI, 5, 27.....	VII, 15.
28. Stephen.....	Gen. XLIX, 53.....	VII, 15.
29. Stephen.....	Exod. I, 6.....	VII, 15.
30. Stephen.....	Gen. L, 13.....	VII, 16.
31. Stephen.....	Josh. XXIV, 32.....	VII, 16.
32. Stephen.....	Exod. I, 7-8.....	VII, 18.
33. Stephen.....	Exod. I, 10, 22.....	VII, 19.
34. Stephen.....	Exod. II, 2.....	VII, 20.
35. Stephen.....	Exod. II, 5, 10.....	VII, 21.
36. Stephen.....	Exod. II, 11-15.....	VII, 29.
37. Stephen.....	Exod. III, 10.....	VII, 34.
38. Stephen.....	Deut. XVIII, 15, 18.....	VII, 37.
39. Stephen.....	Exod. XXXII, 1-8.....	VII, 40.
40. Stephen.....	Amos V, 25-27.....	VII, 43.
41. Stephen.....	Isa. LXVI, 1-2.....	VII, 50.
42. Philip.....	Isa. LIII, 7-8.....	VIII, 32-33.
43. Paul.....	1 Sam. XVI, 1, 12.....	XIII, 22.
44. Paul.....	(Comp. John I, 20 and Mark I, 7).....	XIII, 25.
45. Paul.....	Psa. II, 7.....	XIII, 33.
46. Paul.....	Isa. LV, 3.....	XIII, 34.
47. Paul.....	Psa. XVI, 10.....	XIII, 36.
48. Paul.....	Hab. I, 5.....	XIII, 41.
49. Paul.....	Isa. XLIX, 6.....	XIII, 47.
50. James.....	Amos IX, 11-12.....	XV, 16-18.
51. Paul.....	Exod. XXII, 28.....	XXIII, 5.
52. Paul.....	Isa. VI, 9-10.....	XXVIII 26-27.

### C. THE CHIEF ADDRESSES IN THE ACTS

The Acts is fuller of varied and formal sermons, public speeches, apologies, and appeals than any other New Testament book. The facilities for record and preservation in the first century, as now known, better explain their internal peculiarities than the usual theory of their total construction by Luke. The Scripture-filled sermons by Peter, the unanswerable defense by Stephen, the

longest discourse of all, and the matchless addresses by Paul are alone enough to make the Acts immortal.

1. Of Jesus, at His Ascension.....Acts I, 4-8.
2. Of Peter, at the Election of Matthias.....Acts I, 16-22.
3. Of Peter, at Pentecost.....Acts II, 14-36.
4. Of Peter, in Reply to the Inquiry, "What shall we do?".....Acts II, 38-40.
5. Of Peter, at the Beautiful Gate in the Temple.....Acts III, 12-26.
6. Of Peter, Before the Sanhedrin.....Acts IV, 8-12.
7. Of Gamaliel, Before the Sanhedrin.....Acts V, 35-39.
8. Of Stephen, Before the Sanhedrin.....Acts VII, 2-53.
9. Of Peter, at the House of Cornelius.....Acts X, 34-43.
10. Of Peter, on Circumcision, in the Council of Elders.....Acts XI, 4-17.
11. Of Paul, at Antioch of Pisidia (First Great Address).....Acts XIII, 16-41.
12. Of Peter, at the Council in Jerusalem.....Acts XV, 7-11.
13. Of James, as President of the Council.....Acts XV, 13-21.
14. Of Paul, Before the Areopagus at Athens....Acts XVII, 22-31.
15. Of Demetrius, to the Silversmiths and Artisans.....Acts XIX, 25-27.
16. Of the City Recorder of Ephesus.....Acts XIX, 35-40.
17. Of Paul, to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus..Acts XX, 18-35.
18. Of Paul, at Jerusalem, on the Stairs of Antonia.....Acts XXII, 1-21.
19. Of Paul, Before the Court of the Tribune...Acts XXIII, 1-8.
20. Of Paul, Before Felix at Cæsarea.....Acts XXIV, 10-21.
21. Of Paul, Before Festus at Cæsarea (Appeal to Cæsar).....Acts XXV, 8-11.
22. Of Paul, Before King Agrippa and His Court. Acts XXVI, 2-29.
23. Of Paul, Before the Jewish Elders at Rome..Acts XXVIII, 17-20.
24. Of Paul, to the Roman Populace.....Acts XXVIII, 23-28.

#### d. JOURNEYS REFERRED TO IN THE ACTS

Another unique feature of the book is its narrative of travels. These again show a cosmopolitan interest and breadth truly remarkable. Despite all the ingenuity of the moderns, not a single error has been established as against

Luke's extraordinary knowledge of life in every corner of the empire.

1. Of the Witnesses to the Ascension, from Jerusalem to Bethany.....Acts I, 12.
2. Of Those Scattered Abroad on the First Great Persecution.....Acts VIII, 1, & IX, 19.
3. Of Peter and John to Samaria.....Acts VIII, 14.
4. Of Philip to Gaza, Azotus, and Cæsarea....Acts VIII, 26-27.
5. Of Saul and His Company to Damascus....Acts IX, 1-9.
6. Return from Damascus to Jerusalem.....Acts IX, 23-26.
7. From Jerusalem via Cæsarea to Tarsus.....Acts IX, 30.
8. Journey of Peter to Joppa via Lydda and Sharon.....Acts IX, 32-39.
9. Of Peter from Joppa to Cæsarea.....Acts X, 23.
10. Peter's Return from Cæsarea to Joppa and Jerusalem.....Acts XI, 2.
11. Journey of Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch.....Acts XI, 22.
12. Of Barnabas from Antioch to Tarsus and Return.....Acts XI, 25.
13. Of Agabus and the Prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch.....Acts XI, 27.
14. Of Peter in Hiding from Herod Agrippa I...Acts XII, 17.
15. Of Herod from Jerusalem to Cæsarea.....Acts XII, 19.
16. Of Paul and Barnabas through Cyprus and Asia Minor. First Missionary Tour....Acts XIII, 4-14.
17. Their Return Journey to Antioch.....Acts XIV, 24-28.
18. Journey of "Certain Persons" from Judæa to Antioch.....Acts XV, 1.
19. Of Paul and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem.....Acts XV, 2-5.
20. Return of Paul and Barnabas with Judas and Silas to Antioch.....Acts XV, 25-30.
21. Journey of Barnabas and Mark from Antioch to Cyprus.....Acts XV, 39.
22. Of Paul and Silas from Antioch to Corinth and Return. Second Missionary Tour...Acts XV, 40, to XVI, 22.
23. Of Paul and Silas from Antioch to Illyricum and Return to Jerusalem. Third Missionary Tour.....Acts XVIII, 23, to XXI, 17.

24. Paul's Night Ride from Jerusalem to Cæsarea via Antipatris.....Acts XXIII, 31-33.
25. Journey of Ananias, Tertullus, and Their Party to Cæsarea.....Acts XXIV, 1.
26. Of Festus from Cæsarea to Jerusalem and Return.....Acts XXV, 1-6.
27. Of Agrippa and His Party from Cæsarea Philippi to Cæsarea Palestinæ.....Acts XXV, 13.
28. Of Paul and His Party from Cæsarea to Malta.....Acts XXVII, 1-44.
29. Of Paul and His Party from Malta to Rome. Acts XXVIII, 11-16.





## **II**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK**



## ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK

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FROM THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST UNTIL STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM.  
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- Paragraph 4. The Election of a Successor to the Traitor. Verses 15-26.

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THE ASCENSION

### **III**

#### **TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY**

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##### **A. THE JEWISH PERIOD—CHAPTERS I-VII**

**FROM THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST UNTIL STEPHEN'S  
MARTYRDOM. A. D. 30 TO A. D. 33**

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION AND PREPARATION

### [COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. LUKE'S PREFACE. Verses 1-5.

The author, whom we account with most to have been Luke, the writer of the Third Gospel, relates the present work to that which had preceded it both by referring to the former as "first" and by describing it as giving a narrative of "all the things which Jesus *began* to do and teach until the day of His Ascension." The book now submitted to Theophilus repeats for introduction the last scene of the former work, that of the Ascension, and thus gives double emphasis and prominence to this great event. He makes the total period of forty days from the resurrection forward but one progressive phase of the Lord's Ascension, as does Christ himself in His remark to Mary Magdalene in John xx, 17; and Paul often, as in Eph. iv, 8-10; Phil. iii, 1-12; Col. iii, 1. As before His passion, so here Luke indicates that the chief theme of the Master's discourse was the Kingdom of God, the supreme theme of profitable thought. In the incarnation the Kingdom drew near and John the Baptist sealed it in a baptism of water. At the Ascension it was consummated and was sealed by the Father in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in this brief Preface, Luke has given us the key to his twofold treatment, in his former and latter treatise, of the highest purpose and plan of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, to establish once and for all the reign of the Triune God upon earth. The Gospel prepared the way; the Acts enters upon the campaign of conquest.

#### Paragraph 2. ACCOUNT OF THE ASCENSION. Verses 6-11.

By the end of the six weeks of varied postresurrection manifestations the complete confidence of the Saviour's inner group of disciples had been restored. The expediency, however, of His departure to the Father is clear from the very question which they put to Him relative to the further development of the Kingdom. They are not yet able to comprehend the spiritual nature of that

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND PREPARATION

[TRANSLATION]

#### **Paragraph 1. LUKE'S PREFACE. Verses 1-5.**

I made my first book, O Theophilus, about all the things which Jesus began to do and teach until the day of His Ascension. Prior to that event He had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to His Apostles, whom He had chosen. To whom also, after His suffering, He presented Himself alive with many proofs, being seen repeatedly by them for forty days, and discussing the affairs of the Kingdom of God. And once while He was eating with them He charged them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what was promised by the Father:

"Which you heard from me," he said, "for John baptized with water; you, however, shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit but a few days hence."

#### **Paragraph 2. ACCOUNT OF THE ASCENSION. Verses 6-11.**

So when they assembled to meet Him they asked Him, "Master, is this the time when you are about to restore the Kingdom to Israel?"

But He said in reply,

"It is not yours to perceive times or periods which the Father fixed by His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and



## [COMMENTARY]

Kingdom, nor can they until He withdraw from them physically. They still have the temporal "at this time" and the racial "unto Israel" limitations uppermost in mind. Both these categories He sweeps aside in His final promise and program. The promise is "power" from its highest source—"The Father." The program is, "Ye shall be my witnesses," not to Israel alone, though you must "begin in Jerusalem," but also "in Samaria," and on and ever on "to the end of the earth." What could the Captain say further? His forces are now sifted out and seasoned. They have kept close to Him in all the period of His own conflict and triumph. They have hailed His return from death and tested the fact of His resurrection in every possible way. The time of training, of teaching, of drilling is at an end, the time for action has come. "As the Father sent me, even so send I you . . . therefore go!" With this they have passed the crown of Olivet and are now looking down on Bethany. He lifts His hands in blessing, "and while He was blessing them He parted from them and was carried up into heaven" (Luke xxiv, 51).

The withdrawal was not abrupt. Each of those present had opportunity for a clear experience of the Master's final passing out of view. In that act He completed the transition begun with His rising from the grave and assumed "the body of His glory." It were well for Christians to set their minds upon this, the Lord's Ascension body, rather than the body of His Resurrection, as the probable type of "the body that shall be" for them. As Luke made angelic announcement of the Nativity, so the Ascension is brought to a similar close. Doubtless the significance of the angel's words lies, not in any formal assertion of the manner of Christ's return to earth, but in the fact of His unbroken interest in the works of His followers and the assurance of His spiritual presence with them. His own words, in John xiv, "Let not your hearts be troubled, I am going away for a little while and am to return very shortly," are a proper commentary on this passage.

### **Paragraph 3. STOPPING PLACE AND PERSONNEL OF THE APOSTOLIC GROUP. Verses 12-14.**

Luke's circumstantial account of their return from Olivet, their entry of the city and going to the upper room, as well as his list of the Apostles, reflects the same conscientious and able historian that introduced himself to Theophilus and his readers in the

## [TRANSLATION]

be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

And having said this, He was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud withdrew Him from their sight. And while they stood looking intently toward the sky, as He was going up, suddenly two men in white apparel stood by them, who also said,

"Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken from you into Heaven will come again just as you have seen Him going into Heaven."

**Paragraph 3. STOPPING PLACE AND PERSONNEL OF THE APOSTOLIC GROUP. Verses 12-14.**

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, about a Sabbath's journey distant. And when they entered the city they went to the upper room, where they had been meeting; there were Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas, the son of James. All these continued with one mind regularly meeting for earnest prayer, with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

**Paragraph 4. THE ELECTION OF A SUCCESSOR TO THE TRAITOR. Verses 15-26.**

Now it was on one of those days that Peter stood up among the brethren—there was all together a crowd of about one hundred twenty persons present—and spoke.

"My brothers," he said, "it was necessary that the Scripture should be fulfilled, namely, the utterance which

## [COMMENTARY]

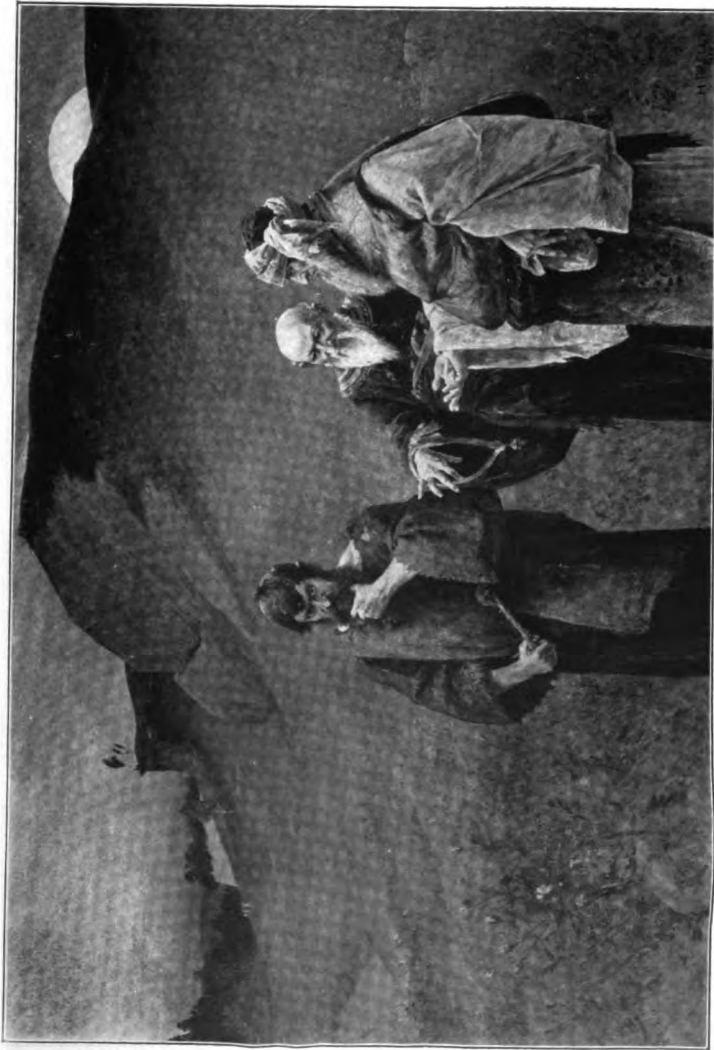
opening of the Third Gospel. The location of the upper room as on Zion, and not Moriah, is altogether probable. Dr. Sanday well states the evidence for the scene of the Last Supper as in the Cænaculum. The fact that the Lord met His disciples there several times after His resurrection and that the article is used in speaking of the place here and the reference to the house of the mother of Mark as a center of stated assembly for prayer (chapter xii, 12) has given rise to the very plausible opinion that all of these events, as well as that on the morning of Pentecost, occurred in one and the same place.

Luke's insertion of the names of the Eleven and of the election of a successor to Judas Iscariot implies the breadth of background on which he has sketched so limited a number of apostolic acts in his present book. In the four lists of the Twelve given in the New Testament (see Page 45) it is often remarked that each falls into three groups of four names each; that the names in each group are the same and headed by the same leader, though otherwise in different order; that Luke's independence, in both his accounts, of the Synoptic tradition is as marked as his consistency. His mention of "the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers" is also noteworthy. What a relief to find our Lord's brothers at last among His convinced supporters!

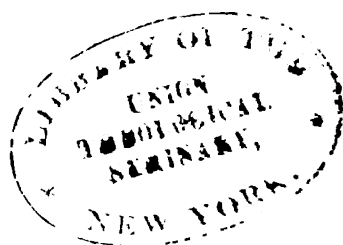
The Eleven and the four brothers, with the women Luke had in mind (Luke xxiii, 55, xxiv, 10, Jesus's mother, Salome, Mary mother of James, Joanna and Mary Magdalene), make a sort of inner group comprising a minimum of twenty, and we soon see that there were one hundred more of like mind in Jerusalem.

**Paragraph 4. THE ELECTION OF A SUCCESSOR TO THE  
TRAITOR. Verses 15-26.**

Peter now manifests his sense of responsibility and gift of leadership. His address here, as is true of the six which follow, is full of dignity and directness and carries conviction to the point of action. The style both of quotation from the Old Testament and throughout is distinctly Petrine, and doubtless Luke appropriated data handed down from the very days of their utterance. His restraint and touch of keen remembrance of the night in Gethsemane implied in his description of Judas, not as the traitor nor murderer of his Lord, but as "guide to those who seized Jesus," is especially creditable.



JUDAS SELLS HIS LORD



## [TRANSLATION]

the Holy Spirit made by the mouth of David about Judas who acted as guide to those who seized Jesus, seeing that Judas was reckoned as one of our number and obtained the appointment of his share in this ministry. (Now with the money paid him for his evil deed he bought a field, and falling down there face foremost, he burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out—a fact which became widely known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that that place received the name, in their language, of Akel-damach, which means the field of Blood.) For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“‘LET HIS DWELLING BE DESOLATE, AND LET THERE BE NO ONE TO INHABIT IT’ (Psa. lxix, 25),  
and again,

“‘LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE OVER HIS ASSIGNMENT’ (Psa. cix, 8).

So, then, it is necessary that one of the men who have been associated with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John down to the day on which He ascended from us—one of these men should become a witness with us as to His resurrection.”

So they brought forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias, and offering prayer they said,

“Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, indicate clearly the one of these two whom Thou hast chosen to receive the same position in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away to go unto his own place.”

Thereupon they cast lots for them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, who was thereby elected to a place among the eleven Apostles.

## [COMMENTARY]

Peter's statement of the qualities of a true witness of the resurrection as reaching back to an association with the Lord Jesus from his baptism by John excludes any of the Lord's brothers, even James, so that none of them is nominated. The naming of Joseph Justus and Matthias, never before nor afterward referred to, gives us a momentary glimpse into that company of scores who could no doubt have fully qualified for the place of Judas Iscariot. Dr. Knowling (*Expositor's Greek Testament*) makes Peter's speech fall into two parts, each introduced by the expression "necessity" at verses 16 and 21. This phrase occurs twenty-five times in the book, and Dr. Knowling says it expresses a divine necessity and is used by all the Evangelists, as by Peter here and Paul (1 Corinthians xv, 25), of the events connected with and following upon the passion. The urgency of this necessity is something like a foretaste of that power promised and soon to be realized which carries Peter and John and Stephen and James and every witnessing soul in the book with unyielding boldness through every phase of embarrassment and persecution, and even with joy unto martyrdom itself. The three steps in the election are the perfection of order and simplicity: first, nominations; second, prayer; and third, balloting. In this entire episode there is not the slightest ground for considering Peter's act officious or unwarranted, nor for the idea that because Matthias is never mentioned again and Paul was given a great apostolic place in Acts, this election was not divinely sanctioned.

NEW TESTAMENT LISTS OF THE APOSTLES

<i>Matthew X, 2-4</i>	<i>Mark III, 16-19</i>	<i>Luke VI, 14-16</i>	<i>Acts I, 13</i>
Simon Peter Andrew	Simon Peter James, son of Zebedee	Simon Peter Andrew	Peter John
James John	John Andrew	James John	James Andrew
Philip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew	Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Thomas Bartholomew Matthew
James, son of Alphæus Lebbæus Thaddæus Simon, the Canaanite Judas Iscariot, who also be- trayed him	James, son of Alphæus Thaddæus  Simon, the Canaanite Judas Iscariot	James, son of Alphæus Simon, the Zealot Judas, son of James Judas Iscariot, who also was the traitor	James, son of Alphæus Simon, the Zealot Judas, son of James Matthias



## CHAPTER II

### THE ADVENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE TIME AND EXTERNAL FEATURES.** Verses 1-4.

And now the time of preparation is past and the day of the new dispensation is come. The number of the Twelve has been restored, the sense of unity has risen into complete control and the one hundred twenty souls await the fulfillment of the Master's promise with one mind.

The Advent of the Holy Spirit brings us to the main business of the book, indeed, to the main business of the Bible itself, which is to declare and set up the spiritual reign of God among men. This is that Kingdom of which Jesus had spoken always, and again on the day of His Ascension. Its times and seasons all merge into this one epochal moment. It is no longer future, it is come.

As Christ said to Nicodemus, "It comes like the wind, we know not whence or whither." As the Baptist declared, it is not a baptism of cleansing water but of purifying fire. The outward tongues of flame symbolize the inward tongues of testimony, and the tongues talk because they have a witness to bear, but the language of the utterance is foreign to outward expectation. A new power has come upon the speakers. It is the Holy Spirit. The features appealing to eye and ear were real but unimportant, and, as Sir William M. Ramsay says, "Peter brushes aside the external, fastens on the inner meaning, and dwells on this alone" (*Pictures of the Apostolic Church*, p. 15). There appears to be every reason for classing this miracle with that called by Paul "The Gift of Tongues," a sign granted to many of the early believers of special spiritual power, and not a little esteemed because of its mystical features. But he taught that the gift of the "interpretation of tongues" was to be preferred, and it would seem that we have here a good illustration in the case of Peter of this latter grace.



THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



## CHAPTER II

### THE ADVENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE TIME AND EXTERNAL FEATURES.**  
Verses 1-4.

On the arrival of the day of Pentecost, while they were all assembled together, suddenly there came out of the sky a sound just like a blast of wind coming nearer and nearer, till it filled the whole house where they were seated. Then they saw what looked like tongues of flame streaming out, and one settled on the head of each. All present were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages just as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves.

**Paragraph 2. THE IMPRESSION ON THE CITY.** Verses 5-13.

At that time there were staying in Jerusalem devout-minded Jews from every nation under the sun, and when this sound was heard the crowd came together wondering because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Every-one was astonished and said in amazement,

“Are not all these who are speaking Galilæans? How then does each of us hear them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, those living in Mesopotamia, in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and

## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 2. THE IMPRESSION ON THE CITY. Verses 5-13.**

The sound is heard very widely and, as it fortunately happens, by temporary as well as settled residents of Jerusalem, from the ends of the earth. Rushing in curiosity to the place of its source, they hear what further perplexes them to the point of amazement—Galilæans speaking in as many different languages as their hearers possessed. As Pentecost was nearly two months later than Passover, it is believed that greater throngs attended this feast than the former. Sixteen different parts of the Roman empire are mentioned as contributing to the audience, and, although they are mainly Jews and pious men, yet they cannot accept unquestioned the proclamation even of the wonderful works of God by Galilæan artisans and fishermen. From those of the baser sort come gibes, charging the jubilation of the apostolic company to the spirits of new wine. This rouses strong protest from Peter and the Eleven and the leader's apology is worthy of the extended space allotted to it. Ramsay well says, "This outline of an epoch-making address delivered on a memorable occasion stands in history as the first utterance of the new church; and as such is a document of the highest interest" (Pictures of the Apostolic Church, p. 12).

**Paragraph 3. PETER'S INTERPRETATION AND APPEAL. Verses 14-36.**

Peter seizes with masterly adroitness the charge of drunkenness and turns the tables successfully against that base accusation, and then swings over to the eminently respectable pietists and quotes with great ability and freedom from their favorite psalmists and prophets, and so powerfully does he plead his case that his appeals at the close appear to have swept a multitude of convinced men into penitence and true faith.

We cannot rightly judge this address by any of our modern standards. Even the apologies of Paul do not furnish proper parallel, unless, perhaps, those addressed solely to Jews, and even then he enjoys an atmosphere which Peter and others had already created. When the time, the auditors, the circumstances, and the results are all taken into view it is clear, that Peter from the very first vindicates his Master's confidence in appointing him bearer of the keys of the Kingdom. His use of the Scripture and his

## [TRANSLATION]

Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the sections of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians though we are, yet we hear them telling in our own languages the wonderful doings of God."

Thus all were astonished and greatly perplexed, and they kept saying each to the other,

"What can this mean?"

Others, however, began to sneer.

"They are filled up with new wine!" they said.

**Paragraph 3. PETER'S INTERPRETATION AND APPEAL.**  
Verses 14-36.

Then Peter, surrounded by the Eleven, stood up and spoke in a loud voice to them:

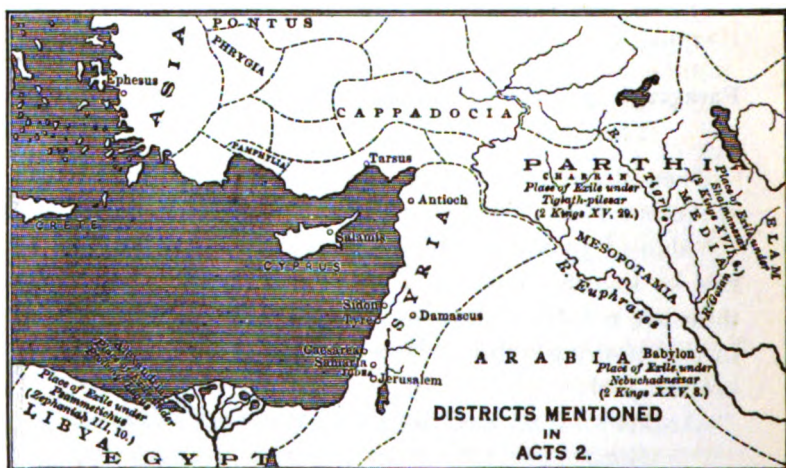
"Men of Judæa and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you and mark well my words. For these are not drunk, as you imagine, since it is only nine in the morning! But this is what was foretold by the prophet Joel:

" 'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAITH GOD,

THAT I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT UPON ALL FLESH,  
AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL  
PROPHECY,

AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS  
AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS.  
AND EVEN UPON MY SLAVES AND SLAVEWOMEN IN  
THOSE DAYS

WILL I POUR MY SPIRIT, AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.  
I WILL DISPLAY PORTENTS IN THE SKY ABOVE  
AND SIGNS UPON THE EARTH BELOW,



[TRANSLATION]

BLOOD AND FIRE AND CLOUDS OF SMOKE  
THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS  
AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD  
BEFORE THE GREAT AND MANIFEST DAY OF THE LORD  
ARRIVES,

YEA, IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT EVERYONE WHO  
CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE  
SAVED' (Joel. ii, 28-32).

"Listen, men of Israel, to these words of mine: That Jesus the Nazarene was a man of God was proved to you by miracles and portents and signs which God did among you through Him as you very well know. Yet this Jesus, betrayed to you in God's definite plan and foreknowledge, you crucified and put to death by the hands of lawless men. God, however, raised Him up again, freeing Him from the pangs of death, since it was impossible that death should hold Him. For David says in reference to Him:

" 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME,  
LEST I SHOULD BE DISTURBED HE IS ALWAYS BESIDE  
ME.

ON THIS ACCOUNT MY HEART IS GLAD AND MY TONGUE  
EXULTS,

AND EVEN MY FLESH LIES DOWN IN HOPE.  
FOR THOU WILT NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HADES  
NOR LET THY HOLY ONE SEE CORRUPTION.  
THOU HAST MADE KNOWN TO ME THE PATHS OF LIFE;  
THOU WILT FILL ME WITH GLADNESS IN THY PRESENCE' (Psa. xvi, 8-11).

"Brother men, I can surely speak freely to you about our Patriarch David, who, of course, died and was buried, and whose tomb is with us to this very day. Since, then,



## [COMMENTARY]

manner of applying it show him to have been possessed of a mind richly stored with the letter of the Old Testament, and one that had accurately observed the matchless Teacher's style in using it. The reference to David's prophecy in the one hundred and tenth psalm is an exact parallel to Jesus's use of the same passage in silencing the Pharisees. But the supreme virtue of Peter's sermon is his unique and correct interpretation of one of the most apocalyptic prophecies of the Hebrew Bible. Here he attains at a single bound the highest plane of spiritual insight. Surely, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon Peter without measure. If only his immediate successors, and especially the apostolic Fathers, had grasped the principle here employed in the reading of like prophecies, what a world of misunderstanding and false teaching the church would have escaped! Even to this day but very few exegetes have learned to use Peter's key to apocalyptic vision. Joel and Ezekiel and Daniel and Zechariah and Jesus and John only employ physical phenomena—blood, fire, smoke, winds, wheels, swords, beasts, birds, dragons, lamps, bowls, trumpets—as pictographic aids symbolically suggestive of infinitely higher things. The spiritual and not the physical, the eternal and not the temporal, the universal and not the particular, the racial and not the national, the unseen and not the seen—these are the things that abide. Decrees cannot silence, crucifixion cannot quench, death cannot kill souls inspired by the Holy Spirit; nothing shall by any means move them. Peter, though, is only one among his equals. The Twelve are only a tenth of the company of one hundred and twenty, and as these all with one accord give testimony to the supremest reach in human experience, namely, the conscious possession of the Spirit of God, they not only mightily stir the city in which they are assembled but soon advance to the capital of the Roman empire.

#### Paragraph 4. THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND ITS RESULTS. Verses 37-47.

Peter's last recorded word, boldly charging his hearers for the second time with the murder of their Messiah and the Source of this sign direct from His throne of His present exalted state, causes hundreds to cry out as with one voice,

"Brothers, what are we to do?"

"Repent," answers Peter. "Do as we and many during the last

## [TRANSLATION]

he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn an oath to him to establish one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw the event and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, declaring that He was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up—of which we all are witnesses. Therefore having been raised to God's right hand, and having received from the Father the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this which you are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into heaven, but he says himself, "THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,

SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND

TILL I PUT THINE ENEMIES BENEATH THY FEET'

(Psa. cx, 1).

"So, then, let all the house of Israel assuredly understand that this very Jesus, whom you have crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ."

**Paragraph 4. THE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AND ITS RESULTS. Verses 37-47.**

When they heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles,

"Brother men, what are we to do?"

"Repent!" answered Peter. "And let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are afar, whomever the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

And with many other words he kept witnessing and appealing to them.

## [COMMENTARY]

three years have done in response to the calls of John the Baptist and Jesus himself; be baptized as a sign of final break with this evil generation, and you too shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Note that it is the possession of the Holy Spirit which crowns and seals the exhortation given. Penitence, baptism in water, and the forgiveness of sins are only preliminary and even negative acts in comparison with baptism of the Spirit from above. On that very day three thousand joyfully respond and join the central group in constant attendance upon the Apostle's teaching, sharing in all respects their artless spiritual fellowship. Luke's summary statement in the last five verses of the chapter no doubt covers a period of weeks, if not months. The type of spontaneous comradeship which sprang into life is in no respect inexplicable. Like states of spiritual-mindedness produce like reactions always and everywhere, as is seen in every home and community where the Holy Spirit is truly manifest. Such groups of believers, moreover, will always be looked upon with favor by all the people, and their numbers will increase in direct ratio to the genuineness and depth of their spiritual living.

[TRANSLATION]

"Save yourselves," he urged, "from this crooked generation!"

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; about three thousand souls were added to them on that very day. Moreover, they kept closely attending to the teaching of the Apostles and to fellowship, the breaking of bread and in praying together.

And a sort of fear fell on every-one while many portents and signs were being done by the Apostles. All those believing kept together and shared everything in common. Moreover, they kept selling their property and their goods and dividing the proceeds among all as each might need it. Also day by day they met with common agreement at the Temple and broke bread together at their homes, eating their food with single-hearted joy, praising God, and regarded with favor by the whole populace, and the Lord added day by day to their number those who were being saved.

## CHAPTER III

### A DAY IN THE COURTS OF THE TEMPLE

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE HEALING OF THE LAME BEGGAR.** Verses 1-10.

As Luke has already told us, the company of those being daily convinced by the testimony of the Twelve and their companions was very popular, especially in the Temple convocations, and he now proceeds to give a typical day of such doings. So wonderful a light had been shed by the Saviour's teachings, death, and resurrection upon every phase of the temple ritual, that the Galilean nucleus of the new movement found unwonted delight in such services, and it would appear that they had given up any thought of return either to their old haunts or employments in the north. Peter and John seem to have become well-nigh inseparable. They are crossing the court between the Golden Gate in the eastern wall and the gate called "The Beautiful," which led up to the Court of the Women, about three o'clock one afternoon, when a helpless beggar is being carried by kindly disposed relatives or neighbors away from his daily position on the steps leading up to the inner precincts, to his house for the night. Not to lose this last chance of an extra copper or so from the pious provincials, he hails them from his rude stretcher with a salutation of peace, at the same time extending his hand, in which is probably a begging bowl, for an alms. The Apostles, moved with pity, stop and the neighbors let down their burden.

"Look here," said Peter, "we have nothing to give, such as you expect, but something I am sure you will agree is far better. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise to your feet." At the same time Peter grasped the cripple's hand, and faith was kindled through the glance of mutual understanding and the lame man leaped to his feet with a bound. The careful statement as to "ankle bones" and "feet" and the tenses of the verbs and repetition of the actions involved are seen to reflect the interest of a close



JOHN AND PETER



## CHAPTER III

### A DAY IN THE COURTS OF THE TEMPLE

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE HEALING OF THE LAME BEGGAR.**  
Verses 1-10.

Now Peter and John were going up to the Temple one day at three o'clock, the afternoon hour of prayer, just as a man lame from his birth was being carried along, whom they were wont to place daily at the Beautiful Gate, as it was called, of the Temple to ask alms from those entering the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the Temple he asked alms of them. Peter fixed his eyes upon him, as did also John, and said,

"Look at us."

So he looked at them, expecting to receive something from them.

"Silver and gold," Peter said, "I do not possess, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk." And he seized him by the right hand and raised him up. At once his feet and ankles grew strong and he leaped up, stood, began to walk about, and went with them into the Temple, walking about, leaping, and praising God. All the people saw him thus leaping, walking, and praising God. And when they came to recognize him as the man that used to be sitting to ask alms at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple they were struck with wonder and astonishment at what had happened to him.



## [COMMENTARY]

observer, if not, indeed, the investigation of a medical inquirer. In any case, the verisimilitude of the record is most artless and convincing. That the man exercised saving faith is made clear by his joining Peter and John in the vesper service in the upper courts and by his outbursts of praise to God and evident reluctance to leave his new friends even for an instant. As he clings to Peter and John and keeps shouting the praises of God while descending again to the Lower Court, hundreds of curious onlookers throng about them and soon recognize in the happy and well-nigh hilarious central figure their long-time cripple acquaintance, now running, now walking in perfect freedom and joy.

**Paragraph 2. PETER'S EXPLANATION OF THE MIRACLE.**  
Verses 11-16.

By the time they reach the long covered colonnade called by Herod Solomon's Portico, running along the inner wall on the east front of the Temple, the Apostles decide to improve the occasion by preaching the gospel to the multitude, incidentally disclaiming any personal honors that now appeared sure to be attributed to them. As always, so here again, Peter seizes the opportunity plainly to charge upon the people of Jerusalem their fatal shortsightedness in not recognizing in Jesus the Nazarene their true and only Messiah, the fulfiller of every Old Testament prophecy, who, though submitting to temporary rejection and death at their hands, had shown Himself to be the very Prince of Life by rising from the grave and by renewing through power granted to His disciples the proofs of His eternal Kingship in miracles and cures. Such miracles and cures He had been wont to do in the days of His flesh in order to develop conviction and faith in His divine claims, and the instance of the healing of this cripple-born man was of like kind. Nothing short of divine power can account for such miracles, and all must acknowledge the infinite mercy of God and His Christ, both in granting such signal evidence and in restraining for a season the outpouring of righteous judgment upon so blind and unresponsive a nation. Under such circumstances there is but one course to pursue. They must repent; they must utterly reverse their mental attitude toward the claims and character of the Nazarene. If ignorance could be accepted as a possible cover for their actions in the past, such excuse will do no longer.

## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 2. PETER'S EXPLANATION OF THE MIRACLE.**  
Verses 11-16.

Thus while he was clinging to Peter and John all the people in amazement came running up toward them in what was called Solomon's Portico. Peter, however, when he saw this addressed the people.

"Men of Israel," he said, "why are you astonished at this man, or why are you staring at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has honored His Servant Jesus, whom you handed over and repudiated before Pilate when he had determined to release Him. You, however, repudiated the Holy and Righteous One and asked as a favor for yourselves a man who was a murderer. And the Prince of Life you put to death, but God raised Him up from the dead, and we are His witnesses. It is His name, that is, the faith that has been placed in it, which has given strength to this man whom you are looking at and know. I say it is the faith He inspires which has made this man hale and strong again before you all."

**Paragraph 3. HIS ELOQUENT APPEAL TO THE THRONG.**  
Verses 17-26.

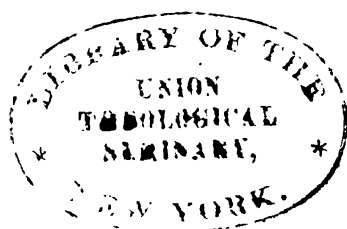
"And now, Brothers, I know that you did it through ignorance, just as your rulers did also, though it was in this way that God fulfilled what He had long ago foretold through all the Prophets, that is, the sufferings of His Christ. Repent therefore and change your whole attitude, so that your sins may be blotted out, and that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the

## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 3. HIS ELOQUENT APPEAL TO THE THRONG.**

Verses 17-26.

Thus Peter leads up to a direct appeal, urging immediate and hearty acceptance of these facts and their logical implications. If their ecclesiastical rulers had urged that Jehovah's Anointed should be revealed with all the pomp and glory of earthly greatness, they had only partially read or caught the meaning of the prophecies concerning Him. In point of fact, all the Prophets foretold the suffering and humiliation of the Messiah as marking the course of His earthly advent until His Ascension again to the right hand of eternal power. Having now fulfilled those prophecies to the letter, there remained on Israel's part acceptance of these truths and full acknowledgment of her Messiah, so that the times of refreshment and restoration thereby assured might follow in their turn and His eternal and abiding manifestation might be made, not in an earthly and temporal form, as they and their teachers wrongly taught, but in a spiritual rule and kingdom, such as was already being set up in their very midst. Warming to his subject, and inspired with spiritual insight such as was never equaled by any Christian teacher of whom we have record, unless it be Paul, this man, Simon Peter, again amazes us by his versatile range and facile accuracy in the use and interpretation of the Old Testament. What Luke in his Gospel says the Saviour did on the road to Emmaus, when, "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," and again in the upper room He referred "to all the things which are written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms," . . . "That the Christ should suffer and should rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance unto remission of sins should be preached in His name"—all this we now see must have been the chief work of the Master during His forty days of fellowship with His disciples, so that He might open their minds, that they might understand the real message of the Scriptures. In Peter's alert and gifted mind, saturated, as it must have been, with the Old Testament letter, quickened during more





## [TRANSLATION]

Lord, and that He may send Jesus, your long-heralded Christ, whom Heaven must receive until the times of the Restoration of all things. Of those times God spoke from the earliest ages through the mouth of his holy Prophets. Moses indeed said,

“THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE YOU UP A PROPHET FROM AMONG YOUR BROTHERS AS HE HAS RAISED ME. HIM YOU MUST HEAR IN EVERYTHING THAT HE SAYS TO YOU. MOREOVER, EVERY SOUL THAT WILL NOT LISTEN TO THAT PROPHET WILL BE UTTERLY CUT OFF FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE’ (Deut. xviii, 15-19; Lev. xxiii, 29).

“Yes, and all the Prophets who have spoken from Samuel to the present time have predicted these very days. You are the Prophets’ sons and heirs of the covenant which God made with your fathers when He said to Abraham,

“‘ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOUR SEED’ (Gen. xii, 3; xxii, 18).

“To you first God, after raising up His Servant, has sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.”

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## [COMMENTARY]

than three years by constant and close companionship with the Teacher of the ages, we have a perfect reaction, and when we illumine it with the gift of the Holy Spirit we have an equipment for eloquent and convincing propaganda suited to the highest work entrusted to men.

## CHAPTER IV

### FIRST COLLISION WITH THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. ARREST AND ARRAIGNMENT OF PETER AND JOHN. Verses 1-7.**

We have in the chapter division here a case of the careless work not infrequent in the early books of the New Testament. At least the first five verses of this chapter should have fallen with Chapter 3.

Peter must have spoken with great success, as we see both from the friends he made for his cause and the enemies he stirred into action. It would appear too that the day must have been either a Sabbath, or new moon, or feast day, so numerous was the response to Peter's appeal and so formal and fully attended an assembly of officials called together, not at once, but on the morning following. It is well to note that the Sadducees take the foremost part now in opposing the new Way, their aversion to the doctrine of the resurrection being a large factor in such antagonism, as we shall find all through the book. However, it appears that every type of functionary connected in any way with Temple hill was deeply stirred at the egregious presumption of these Galilean fishermen in taking upon themselves the function of doctors of law and teaching the people, boldly setting themselves up as teachers of the Holy Writings. True to type, those of least real authority make the greater demonstration and act with more severity before than after the hearing of the case on its merits. As it is now late and they wish to clear the courts before going to dine, the Captain and his deputies arrest Peter and John and throw them into the common jail overnight. Meanwhile the hierarchy is led by the priests, who were on duty, to take action, and a general call was sent out for a convocation of the Greater Council the day following. How like in purpose and personnel it is to the gathering at Passover which condemned Jesus! There is the same crafty Annas and his son-in-law in the high-priesthood, Caiaphas. John and Alexander

## CHAPTER IV

### FIRST COLLISION WITH THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. ARREST AND ARRAIGNMENT OF PETER AND  
JOHN. Verses 1-7.**

While they were speaking thus to the people there came upon them the priests, the Captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees, greatly vexed at their teaching the people and proclaiming the resurrection of the dead as instanced in the case of Jesus. So they laid hands on them, and as it was already evening, put them in custody till the following day. Many, however, who had heard the Word, believed, so that the number of men alone came to be about five thousand.

An assembly followed on the next day, of their rulers, elders, and scribes in Jerusalem. Annas the High Priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander and those who belonged to the High Priest's family. Then they arraigned the Apostles and began to ask them, "By what power or in what name have such men as you done this?"

**Paragraph 2. PETER ADDRESSES THE SANHEDRIN.  
Verses 8-15.**

Upon that Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, replied to them:

"Rulers and Elders of the people, if we are arraigned



## [COMMENTARY]

of the same large household are named, and doubtless the groups of rulers, elders, and scribes referred to are identically the same as on the greater occasion but a few months earlier. Even the formal question of the court is the same. "By what authority or in whose name do such men as you perform what the people call 'miracles' and unduly disquiet them in the Temple on sacred feast days?"

**Paragraph 2. PETER ADDRESSES THE SANHEDRIN.**  
Verses 8-15.

Again Peter leaps eagerly to his task. Again we are told and can see for ourselves that he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Since the night of the Last Supper, when Peter was told in Gethsemane that two swords were enough, and later that these must be sheathed, he has developed swordsmanship of another sort and has become adept in swinging with swift execution the two-edged sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Peter of Pentecost and of Solomon's Portico here stands undaunted before the greater Council of the Sanhedrin and charges their rulers, as he had the common people, with crucifying their King, with setting aside the chief stone—the corner stone, indeed, in the permanent temple of Jehovah—with killing the Curer of souls and Healer of broken hearts, vainly trying to discredit the credentials of the only Saviour, who when among them had given the touch of healing to the outward in order to prove His power to save the inward man, and who, in the case of this confirmed cripple, never able before to stand alone, has given new evidence of His invincible power. All this and more leads up to his ringing climax: "There is no salvation in any other nor any other name under Heaven given to men through which we must be saved." These words seem to parallel the outspoken and otherwise unequaled claim of Jesus himself before this same judge and court, when he said that he was verily the Son of God and that hereafter He should be seen sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of Heaven. No wonder that the undesigned compliment is given to these unschooled and artless men in the observation that their auditors perceived a likeness in speech and manner between Master and disciples: they had learned of Him. Moreover, there stood by their side the proof of all that had been claimed—the cripple whom they had familiarly known for years now alert and agile and eager to testify in his turn.

## [TRANSLATION]

this day for a kind deed done to a helpless man, and are asked how he was cured, let it be well understood by you all and by all the people of Israel that it is in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, it is in Him, I say, that this man stands sound again before you. This is

“‘THE STONE SCORNE BY YOU THE BUILDERS, BUT IT HAS BEEN MADE THE CORNER STONE’ (Psa. cxviii, 22).

“Moreover, there is no salvation in any-one else, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men through which we must be saved.”

They began to wonder as they contemplated the outspoken manner of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unschooled and artless men, and came to realize that they had been companions of Jesus. They also saw the man who had been cured standing there with them, and could say nothing against it. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and began to hold a consultation.

**Paragraph 3. OFFICIAL WARNING AND RELEASE OF THE APOSTLES. Verses 16-22.**

“What are we to do with these men?” they asked. “For the fact that a significant miracle has been wrought is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we are unable to deny it. But lest it spread any further among the people, we had better threaten them not to speak in future about this name to any-one whatever.”

Then they called them back and ordered them neither to speak nor teach at all about the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them:

“Judge yourselves, whether it is right before God to

## [COMMENTARY]

The Sanhedrin is most perplexed. The prisoners are ordered to withdraw, that unembarrassed consultation may be held.

**Paragraph 3. OFFICIAL WARNING AND RELEASE OF THE APOSTLES. Verses 16-22.**

And now craft and privilege, unequal to the task of meeting on equal ground these Galilæans, are fearful lest their witness is all too true and lest He whom they crucified may suddenly appear and vindicate His claims and those of His unquailing representatives. But more than this, they fear to attempt anything drastic lest they have to reckon with the people, for by this time there is a large section of the Jerusalem populace, including not a few families of station and influence, who are favorable to the new movement. Among the five thousand confessed followers of the new faith we must remember there were such citizens as Joseph of Arimathæa, Simon and Lazarus of Bethany, Cleophas, Nicodemus, Stephen, Barnabas, Ananias, and an ever-growing number of priests and leaders becoming convinced by the plain and unanswerable power of the events preceding and following the fateful Passover of the Crucifixion. Gamaliel and his favorite disciple, Saul of Tarsus, were no doubt already debating what might come from this strange fanaticism. As yet, however, not even the Sadducees were ready to join issue to the point of persecuting this sect within the Pale. They, therefore, called back the disciples and enjoined strict silence as to the doctrine and name of Jesus. But Peter and John, instead of quietly acquiescing, assert binding allegiance to the higher powers, and the baffled Sanhedrin can only threaten future discipline of a severer nature, and let them go.

**Paragraph 4. DIVINE SANCTION ASKED AND GRANTED. Verses 23-31.**

Returning to their friends, evidently assembled together in supplication for their safety, Peter and John report their experiences, and praises for their release fill all hearts. The formal phrasing of this outburst is one of the series of noteworthy expressions of like kind preserved in the Lukan writings, ranking with Simeon's and Elisabeth's outpourings in the Gospel, the Old Testament being quoted in the same way and the deity of the Lord stated in well-nigh creedal terms. Such petition and such demonstration of

## [TRANSLATION]

listen to you rather than to God. Surely, it is not possible for us to cease speaking of what we have seen and heard."

After they had threatened them still further they let them go, for they could find no way to punish them on account of the people, for every-one was praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this miracle of healing had taken place was over forty years of age.

**Paragraph 4. DIVINE SANCTION ASKED AND GRANTED.**  
Verses 23-31.

When released they went to their friends and told them all that the High Priests and elders had said. And on hearing it they all raised their voices with one accord to God and said,

"O Sovereign Master, Thou art the Maker of heaven, earth, and sea, and all that in them is. Thou didst speak by the mouth of our father David Thy servant through the Holy Spirit, saying,

"**'WHY DID THE NATIONS RAGE AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE  
EMPTY PLANS?**

**THE KINGS OF THE EARTH ROSE IN HOSTILE ARRAY  
AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER  
AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST'**

(Psa. ii, 1-2).

"For there actually gathered in this very city against Thy holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations and the peoples of Israel, but only to accomplish what Thy hand and Thy purpose had already determined should be done. So now, O Lord, look upon their threatenings and grant to Thy

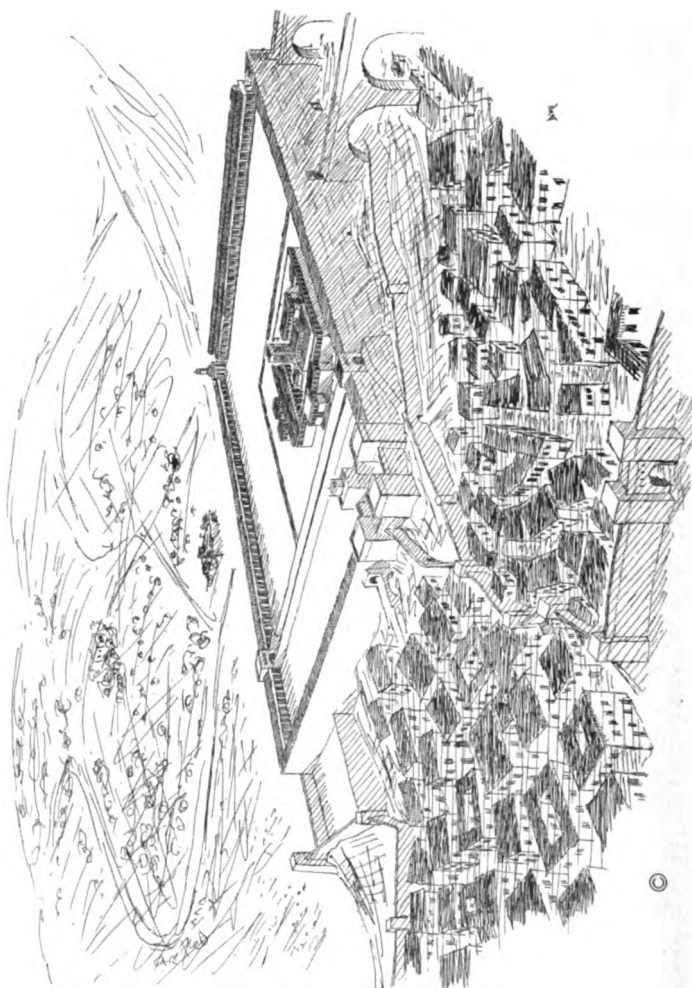
## [COMMENTARY]

unafraid loyalty are sanctioned by a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and eloquent outbursts on the part of the believers, who declare everywhere their testimony to the risen and reigning Saviour.

**Paragraph 5. THE COMMUNITY OF GOODS. Verses 32-37.**

When the now fast-growing church was again visited with special tokens of the Spirit's control the same state of social equilibrium is remarked. Differences in matters of station or possession tend to disappear, not, as far as may be seen from the narrative, because of any pronounced expectation or teaching of the Saviour's soon return to earth, but as a spontaneous and normal tribute to the vanishing sense of the importance of outward circumstance and the rise of higher standards of estimate, so that the physical and seen give way to the spiritual and unseen. This is always the tendency wherever like conditions prevail. It is the carrying out into actual life of the injunction of Jesus to the rich young man, and appears akin to the generous sharing of one's possessions so often enjoined by Paul and commended in his Epistles. Not only did it prevail in Jerusalem but it seems to rest in the background at Lydda, Joppa, Cæsarea, Damascus, Antioch, Colossæ, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Puteoli, and Rome. In the last two communities even the catacombs still reflect it. Too much has been made of its formal or artificial features, whereas it is more a spontaneous tribute to the spiritual unity of believers without prescription or definition, being an outward sign of an inward grace and left entirely to free expression. In the two particular cases cited, namely, those of Barnabas, here, and the deceitful pair, in the following chapter, it is evident that we have nothing more than the working out, under the basal laws of character expression, of the two tendencies, the one beneficent and the other baleful, controlling soul-development. The Apostles have formulated no fixed rules, and apply none in judgment, save those controlling every moral action. The fact that they are formally recognized as both the receivers and dispensers of such funds does not in the slightest degree appear to lay any obligation upon the conscience of the other members of the growing community of believers than that which a share in the outpouring of the same Divine Spirit always occasions and abundantly accounts for. When and wherever the whole body of believers are of one





RECONSTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.—THE TEMPLE AREA FROM  
THE DAMASCUS GATE

## [TRANSLATION]

servants power to speak Thy Word with untrammelled freedom, while Thy hand is stretched forth to cure and to work signs and portents through the name of Thy Servant Jesus."

When they had finished praying the place where they had gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak boldly the Word of God.

**Paragraph 5. THE COMMUNITY OF GOODS. Verses 32-37.**

The whole body of those believing was of one heart and soul; not one of them called anything he possessed his own; on the contrary, everything they had was common property. Meanwhile the Apostles kept giving their testimony with great efficiency to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great favor was shown to them all. Indeed, there was not one destitute person among them, for those who had property or houses would sell them and keep bringing the proceeds of the sales, laying it down at the feet of the Apostles, who made distribution to each one just as he needed it.

Thus it was that Joseph, who had been called Barnabas by the Apostles, which means Son of Comfort, a Levite born in Cyprus, sold a farm which he possessed, brought the money, and laid it down at the feet of the Apostles.

## [COMMENTARY]

heart and soul, as Luke says of the early Christians twelve times in this wonderful story, they will inevitably learn neither to call any man common or unclean nor to withhold any of their temporary possessions from service to the common weal.



## CHAPTER V

### FURTHER REVERSES AND TRIUMPHS

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. THE FALL OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA. Verses 1-11.

It is probable that envy of Barnabas, who had gained so noble a name by his fine act of devotement to the common good, was the tap root to the deceitful plot of Ananias and Sapphira. So Cain envied Abel and Saul David, and their ends were the same. Have we not also here again an example of the blundering act of the chapter-chopper? Ought not this case of failure to be joined with that of success in the paragraph preceding? The spirit of Mammon drives out the spirit of God. Greed quenches charity. The son of the Paraclete is followed by the son of Perdition and not all women are like Mary of Bethany, or Mary the Lord's mother, or Mary the mother of Mark. Achan's effort to share the advantage of conquering the enemy without first conquering self had been the standing lesson for Israel for more than a thousand years, and now the entrance upon the newer spiritual Canaan must not be marred by like treachery. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. Peter is right: the sin is not against men but against God. The fate of Judas at the beginning of the book is not more graphically drawn than that of this pair of traitors here. As Sapphira had shared equally in conniving at the hypocrisy, she tasted the same death in its unmasking. The fear such quick judgment inspires is wholesome, kindling clean respect and proper awe. As the sin is against God, the vengeance is also His, and the effect is not lost either on the church itself or on the entire community.

## CHAPTER V

### FURTHER REVERSES AND TRIUMPHS

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE FALL OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.**  
Verses 1-11.

There was, however, a man named Ananias who with Sapphira his wife sold some property, but with her full connivance kept back part of the price, and part he brought and laid at the feet of the Apostles. But Peter said:

"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart that you should try to deceive the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of this land? While still unsold was it not yours? And after the sale, did it not still remain in your control? How did you conceive such a plan as this? It is not to men you have lied, but to God."

When Ananias heard these words he fell down dead, and great fear fell on all who heard about it. So the younger men arose, wrapped up the body, and carried it out for burial.

About three hours later his wife came in, knowing nothing of what had happened. Then Peter asked her,

"Tell me, whether you sold the land for so much?"

"Yes," she answered, "for so much."

Peter said to her:

"How did you come to agree together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door and they will carry you out."

## [COMMENTARY]

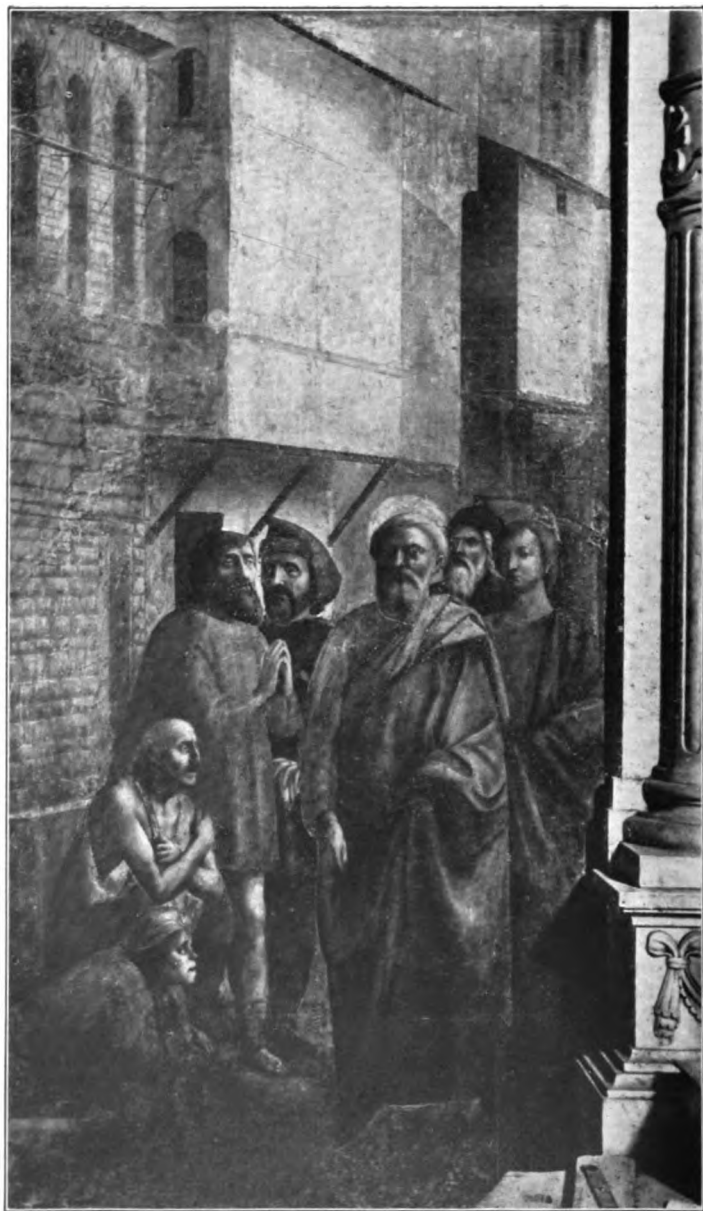
**Paragraph 2. THE CHURCH IN THE TEMPLE COURTS.**  
Verses 12-16.

And now the time has come for more advanced steps to be taken toward forming the church. The word "church" indeed appears in the book for the first time in the above paragraph. The conventicle had been sufficient for a time, but the company has gradually outgrown it and must now develop a more adequate organization. Already there is the usual division known in the synagogue as between the elder and younger men. From the very first the Apostles have been the recognized arbiters in every mooted debate as to practice or policy. We also see here, as from the first Pentecostal occasion, the mention of women as perfectly normal factors in the new society. The episode of Ananias and Sapphira helps clear the atmosphere as to the moral sincerity which must prevail, and the power of working miraculous cures gives added authority to the Apostolic leadership. Unconscious of any deep antagonism as between themselves and the Jewish system, and really enjoying for the first time spiritual insight into the true significance of the Hebrew ritual and sacred writings, the believers gravitated as by right to the Temple, and in order to meet in semi-privacy and at the same time where there was abundant space, they formed the custom of assembling on the eastern side of the lower Court beneath the covered Portico of Solomon. The widely known case of the impotent man by the Gate leading out of this court suggested the idea of bringing various cases of more or less severe kinds directly into the Temple. Thus a sort of clinical levee greeted the Apostles' daily arrival and even at points of vantage in the contiguous streets sick and suffering people were placed to receive the benefit of the Apostles' shadow in passing by.

**Paragraph 3. SECOND ARREST OF PETER AND HIS COMPANIONS.** Verses 17-26.

The inevitable result of such successes followed quickly. Peter, as always in Acts, takes the brunt of the attack. John is no doubt his staunch supporter, and although they do not lack equally courageous comrades, the blustering Temple authorities are satisfied to try intimidating the larger number by handling the leaders roughly. Another night in the Temple dungeon follows a successful





PETER'S SHADOW HEALS THE SICK

## [TRANSLATION]

On the instant she fell down at their feet dead, and the young men came in, found her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband. And great fear fell upon the whole church and upon every-one hearing these facts.

**Paragraph 2. THE CHURCH IN THE TEMPLE COURTS.**  
Verses 12-16.

Moreover, there kept occurring among the people many signs and marvels by the hands of the Apostles while they all used to meet together by common consent in Solomon's Portico. Of the outsiders, however, not one dared to join them, yet the people highly esteemed them, and more and more throngs of believers were added to the Lord both of men and women. This went so far that they would actually carry out their sick into the streets and lay them on beds and couches so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Even from the towns near Jerusalem, a crowd kept coming bringing sick people and such as were troubled by unclean spirits, and every one of them was cured.

**Paragraph 3. SECOND ARREST OF PETER AND HIS COMPANIONS.** Verses 17-26.

Aroused and filled with jealousy, the High Priest and all his party—the sect of the Sadducees—laid hands on the Apostles and thrust them into the public prison. But an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors during the night and led them out, and said,

“Go stand and speak in the Temple all the words of this life, to the people.”

## [COMMENTARY]

day of healing and teaching. But the promised Presence is not withheld. An angel, Luke's favorite agent of Divine Providence, releases the Apostles and commands them to return at once to Solomon's Portico and begin the day there preaching as usual. "They did as they were told," and as they had previously said they would, "obeyed God rather than men." How grave an estimate the authorities have come to put on this invasion of the Temple precincts by the new Way is seen in the nature of the assembly, apparently called together in so full force for the first time since the condemnation of Jesus, to take up this menacing problem. Not only the high priestly party of Sadducees, but the Pharisees as well, and the "entire Senate of the Sons of Israel," are waiting at the accustomed hour in their hall Gazith opening off of the court of the Priests. The utmost formality prevails. The case is called and the Apostles ordered in. The Captain of the Guard is informed by his deputy that the prisoners have escaped. His chagrin and that of those responsible for calling together the Sanhedrin is beyond bounds. Doubtless certain members of the court, possibly Gamaliel among them, were not as distressed as the more radical party of the Sadducees.

**Paragraph 4. SECOND ARRAIGNMENT AND REPLY OF PETER. Verses 27-32.**

Suddenly word is brought that the men in question are down in the great court below, even more vigorously than usual addressing and moving the crowds assembled about them. The Captain himself now goes at the head of his staff and without any resistance, such as he anticipates, rearrests the Apostles and brings them well surrounded, but not roughly, before the Sanhedrin. Caiaphas, however, is in no temperate mood. He remembers the last days of the Son of Man and the difficulty in steering His case to successful judgment. He and others present clearly recall the unsteady pulse of the populace at that time and the rebound since, from their too easy assumption for themselves and their children of "this man's blood." His high-pitched voice and prejudiced opening charge in the arraignment plainly confirm Luke's claims as to the divided attitude of Jerusalem concerning "this man's blood." Again Peter plays his part as the Rock. Nor does John alone seem to be present with him, but possibly the other ten have insisted on sharing his arraignment. There is no wavering as to the question of whose

[TRANSLATION]

They did as they were told, and about daybreak went into the Temple and began to teach. Meanwhile the High Priest and his party assembled, called together the Sanhedrin, and the entire Senate of the Sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have the Apostles brought. The officers, however, when they came could not find them in the prison, and went back and reported.

"We found the prison," they said, "locked in all security, and with the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened it we found no one inside!"

When the Captain of the Temple and the Chief Priests heard this they were in grave doubt as to what it might lead to. Some one came, however, and announced to them:

"Why, the very men you put in prison are standing in the Temple and teaching the people."

Then the Captain went with his officers and brought them, not using violence, however, for they feared lest the people might stone them.

**Paragraph 4. SECOND ARRAIGNMENT AND REPLY OF PETER. Verses 27-32.**

So they brought them and placed them before the Sanhedrin, and the High Priest asked them:

"Did we not give you strict injunction not to teach in this name? Just look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you desire to bring this man's blood upon us."

But Peter and the other Apostles replied:

"We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered, hang-



## [COMMENTARY]

authority they shall acknowledge. "Must" is the key word here. There is evidently "power" in other than human hands, and once having felt it they are not disobedient to its compelling guidance. The real issue is pressed at the point of vital conflict and the language is as unequivocal as any Caiaphas had used. Indeed, Peter himself takes the judge's place and arraigns his accusers:

"You murdered and did to death on a cross the Prince of Israel and our only Saviour. The God of our Fathers raised Him up from death and exalted Him to His rightful place in sharing the divine throne. This entire city beheld and shared in the black disgrace of your fell deed. But the third day He arose again from the dead, and we here and at least a hundred more now in Jerusalem saw Him repeatedly, and although He had repeatedly promised that it should be so, some of us were long in becoming convinced. He, however, continued among us for forty days, appearing to us under every possible circumstance and condition, both here and on our return to Galilee, fully identifying himself and completing His teaching. Finally we all came back here at His command, and after further conferences with us and concluding instructions, He withdrew from earth, ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives, just over the Kidron. In obedience to His injunction we have remained here, and His own Spirit has come upon us, as He promised, and we have given ourselves to the sole task of witnessing to these facts and persuading as many as we can that He is the Messiah, and only Redeemer of the world's sin, and are now ready to be sworn and to give our testimony as witnesses to these facts."

**Paragraph 5. GAMALIEL'S ADVICE AND ITS ACCEPTANCE. Verses 33-42.**

This was passing the limits of endurance, and especially for the Sadducees, to which party the High Priest and chief rulers belonged. A great clamor arose demanding the death of the Apostles. In so large a group of picked leaders and teachers there was sure to be at least one of too wise judgment to permit matters unchallenged to drift into complete anarchy. Nicodemus in this same Sanhedrin had vainly tried to stem the tide when Jesus was being overborne by a like frenzy, and now Gamaliel, a greater teacher in Israel probably than Nicodemus, and without the handicap of having his motives questioned, arises and adroitly restores the

## [TRANSLATION]

ing Him upon a cross. And God has exalted Him to His right hand as Prince and Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. And we are witnesses to these things with the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

**Paragraph 5. GAMALIEL'S ADVICE AND ITS ACCEPTANCE.** Verses 33-42.

On hearing this they became furious and wanted to kill them. But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a Teacher of the Law, highly revered by all the people, arose and ordered the men to be put outside for a few minutes. Then he said:

"Men of Israel, have a care as to what you are going to do to these men. For a few years ago Theudas sprang up, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men joined him, but he was killed and all who followed him were dispersed and finally vanished. After him Judas the Galilæan arose in the days of the census-taking and led off some people with him, but he also perished and all who obeyed him were scattered. So now I say to you, just let these men alone; leave them to themselves. In case this project or this movement is from men, it will collapse; if, however, it is from God, you will not be able to put it down, lest, indeed, you find yourselves fighting against God."

So they agreed with him, and calling in the Apostles beat them and let them go, ordering them not to speak about the name of Jesus. Thereupon they left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been thought worthy to suffer shame on behalf of the Name, nor did they

## [COMMENTARY]

equilibrium. Asking the prisoners to withdraw, he addresses the assembly, calling to memory the vain uprisings led by Theudas and his four hundred and Judas of Galilee and his group of rebels. Just so this latest fanaticism centering in the Nazarene, who has already been put out of the way, must fall of its own weight and thus is hardly worthy of such high attention, or else perchance it may turn out to be of divine origin, as claimed, in which case it were surely better not to be found fighting against God. Gamaliel shows true diplomacy in not appearing to overstress his argument, and as he led the majority in the Sanhedrin his suggestion that the Apostles be beaten and commanded to cease further public activities under threat of more serious punishment prevailed. In the name of their Master the stripes were accepted joyfully, and

[TRANSLATION]

cease for a single day teaching in the Temple or from house to house and preaching the gospel of Jesus the Christ.

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[COMMENTARY]

the stern injunctions of the court were apparently taken even less seriously.

Luke's summary statement at the end of the chapter must not be foreshortened too much, for it is doubtless intended to cover a period of months, if not, indeed, years.

## CHAPTER VI

### DIVISION OF DUTIES AND SHARING OF LEADERSHIP

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE RISE OF THE DIACONATE. Verses 1-7.**

Thus early we have come to the embarrassment of large success. With growth in numbers complications always arise, especially when social groups of different races are involved. Add to these facts the most perplexing of all, namely, how to satisfy the varying tastes as to table-board of charity recipients, and they widows, and so doubtless no longer young, and you have the case heightened to the explosion point. No wonder it irritated the Twelve and called for diplomatic, if not drastic treatment. The common rights of the throngs of disciples, now numbering many hundreds, are carefully respected, and their suffrage enlisted in settling the situation. Although the Apostles suggested the plan which was adopted they did not foist it arbitrarily upon the assembly nor take its adoption nor operation out of the hands of the multitude. The throng chose the Seven, and the Twelve but confirmed and sanctioned the act, with solemn prayer and laying on of hands, and thus the danger point was happily passed. Glancing at the names of the Deacons, as they came to be called, we see how excellent was the judgment which the disciples used. Luke does not characterize any but Stephen, and then probably only because of his later martyrdom; but he could say as much of Philip as of Stephen, and doubtless Nicolaus of Antioch was one of the important links in the ultimate transfer of power from Jerusalem to that city. The Greek type of names is always remarked upon as showing a fine sense of propriety in the effort to allay further criticism. The fact that a like question is not again raised is confirmatory of the satisfaction wrought. The sequence of sentences also points in the same direction, for the period of prosperity is only accelerated meanwhile, and the continued rapid increase in the number of the disciples, especially of converted priests, may not be without actual relation to the improved conditions now known in connection with the

## CHAPTER VI

### DIVISION OF DUTIES AND SHARING OF LEADERSHIP

[TRANSLATION]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE RISE OF THE DIACONATE. Verses 1-7.**

At this time, as the number of the disciples was constantly increasing, the Greek-speaking Jews began making complaints against the native Jews on the ground that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve called the throng of the disciples together and said :

"It does not seem proper for us to neglect the preaching of the Word of God and serve tables. Therefore, Brothers, pick out seven reputable men of your own number, spiritually-minded and wise, whom we may appoint over this business. We ourselves, however, will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word."

This proposal commended itself to the entire throng, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These men they brought to the Apostles, who after praying laid their hands upon them. Meanwhile the Word of the Lord kept spreading and the number of the disciples rapidly increasing in Jerusalem, and a large number of the priests became obedient to the faith.

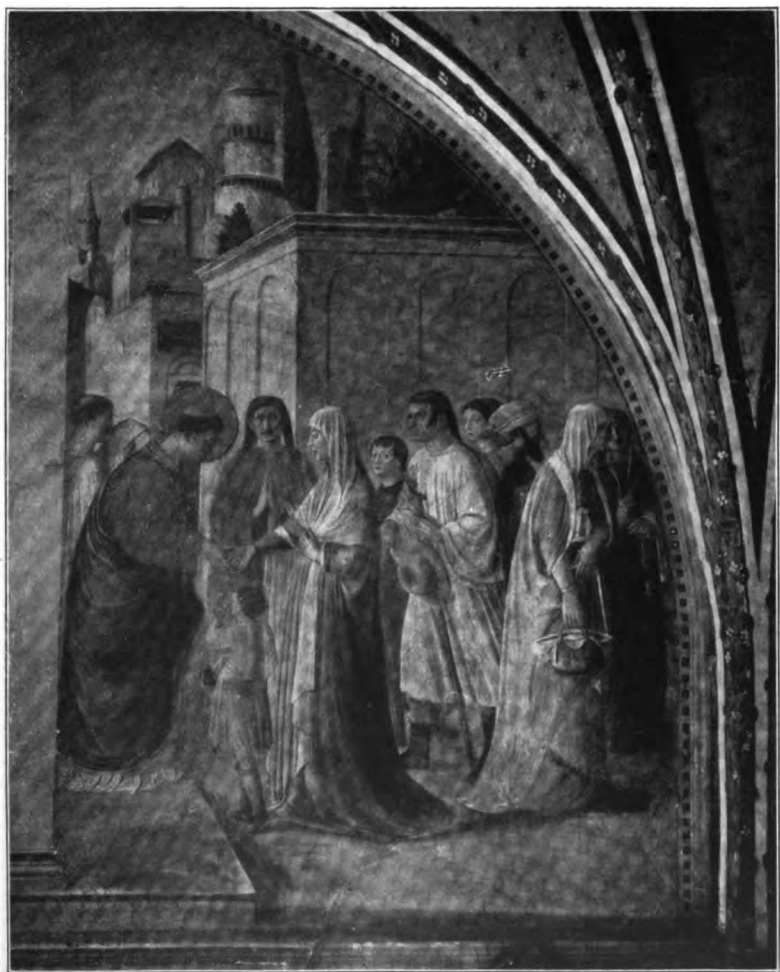
## [COMMENTARY]

administration of the sustentation funds. The fact that so soon large numbers of the priests "become obedient to the faith," as well as the fact that neither they nor anybody else of standing ever denies the testimony which the Apostles and Evangelists are always asserting, is one of the most important evidences for the truth of said testimony that could possibly be given.

**Paragraph 2. THE ARREST AND ARRAIGNMENT OF  
STEPHEN. Verses 8-15.**

The disruption of inward community peace which was so imminent and so adroitly avoided in the last paragraph is now threatened from without and finally accomplished by the foul assassination of the foremost deacon just elected. Stephen was no less efficient in serving the spiritual than the temporal interests of the people. As his stewardship cannot be successfully attacked, his theology is brought into question. One cannot help noticing that it is from precisely the class whose widows Stephen is so kindly serving, namely, the Hellenists, or Greek-speaking Jews, that the venomous assault springs forth. The mention of certain from the synagogue of Cilicia among the enemy is often said to refer possibly to the coming protagonist from Tarsus, who is to play a title role in this drama.

As Stephen in his fully reported defense does not deny specifically the charges laid against him, but, rather, explains and defends them, we get an inkling to the subject of the disputes which brought on his arraignment for blasphemy. That he worsened them one and all in open argument only deepened their fell determination to silence him forever. It is easy enough to understand how the scribes and elders could be induced to attack Stephen, but that the people were so large a party to the action bespeaks the most consummate plot that had been hatched in Jerusalem for many a day. Several points of comparison are found between Stephen's martyrdom and that of his Lord, but Dr. Ramsay well remarks that in two respects the contrast is equally clear—when Jesus was formally accused before the Sanhedrin "He answered to never a word." Stephen replied in possibly the longest address recorded in the New Testament. Stephen, moreover, was deeply moved, whereas Jesus was perfectly quiet throughout. Surely, the chief charge which seems to have precipitated Stephen's arrest—his alleged depreciation of the Temple and the law of Moses—is



STEPHEN AS DEACON DISPENSING ALMS





## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 2. THE ARREST AND ARRAIGNMENT OF STEPHEN. Verses 8-15.**

Now, Stephen, who was full of divine favor and power, was doing great marvels and signs among the people. Certain members, however, of the so-called synagogue of the Freed-men, and of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, together with some from Cilicia and Asia, became aroused and began to dispute with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. As a final resort they induced some men to say, "We have heard him utter blasphemous expressions against Moses and God." In this way they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, who rushed upon him, violently seized him, and led him before the Sanhedrin. Here they brought forward false witnesses who said:

"This man never ceases his talk against this Holy Place and the Law. For we have even heard him saying that this Jesus, the Nazarene, will pull down this Place and will change the customs which were handed down to us by Moses!"

So all that were sitting in the Sanhedrin fixed their eyes upon him, and they saw that his face looked just like the face of an angel.

## [COMMENTARY]

identical with that laid against Jesus. He appears to have quoted Christ's remark about the coming destruction of the earthly temple; that its spiritual counterpart might more fully appear, but, of course, as in the case of his Master, he was not guilty of the slightest tendency or desire to bring either disaster or disruption upon Jewish law or institutions. Stephen's shining, angelic countenance gave the lie direct to all such base insinuations, but this only served to inflame the passions of his hot accusers the more.

## CHAPTER VII

### STEPHEN'S DEFENSE AND MARTYRDOM

[COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 1. AN INTERPRETATION OF HEBREW HISTORY. Verses 1-53.**

**a. IN THE TIME OF ABRAHAM AND THE PATRIARCHS.  
Verses 1-8**

For Stephen's scholarly defense his hearers were totally unprepared save as his glowing face arrested and chained their attention. If we remember that he was addressing the most learned association of seventy men, not only of his own but of any other nation at that age, with minds like that of Gamaliel and Saul not a few, a company the majority of whom had passed through the scorching fires of Herodian hatred and persecution and who had stood proudly, at any cost to themselves, for the distinctive tenets of strict Pharisaism, we will be the better able to see why Stephen enthralled and at the same time stirred them to the depths of antagonism. Yet so able and easy was his mastery of the dialectic and documents with which they were most familiar that they were compelled to hear him almost if not quite to the finish. He began in tones of the sincerest respect and immediately disarmed any possible interruption by speaking of the heavenly visions vouchsafed to Abraham, which was like music to his listeners' ears. Tracing rapidly the chief steps in the life of the Father of the Hebrew nation, he pointed out what none could dispute—that even he, obedient and full of faith as he was, did not, during his entire life, possess more than a narrow burial plot in the land of promise, showing that there was nothing inherently sacred nor peculiarly necessary in the local territory or institutions his auditors so tenaciously claimed.

Though finally given a son and the peculiar rite of circumcision as a sign of special acceptance, yet the most outstanding promise of all as to Abraham's descendants was a period of centuries of slavery and exile before they should be permitted to dwell even



STEPHEN BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST



## CHAPTER VII

### STEPHEN'S DEFENSE AND MARTYRDOM

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1.** AN INTERPRETATION OF HEBREW HISTORY. Verses 1-53.

**a.** IN THE TIME OF ABRAHAM AND THE PATRIARCHS.  
Verses 1-8

Then the High Priest said,

"Are these things true?" And Stephen replied:

"Brother men and Fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia before his residence in Haran, and said unto him, 'Go forth from your land and your kinsfolk and go unto a land which I will show you.' Then he left the land of Chaldea and settled in Haran. And after the death of his father God removed him to this land in which you now dwell. Yet He did not give him an inheritance in it, not so much as a foot of the land. He did, however, promise to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him, though as yet he had no children. What God declared was that his descendants should live in a foreign land, where they should be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. Moreover, He said,

"I Myself will judge whatever nation enslaves them, and after that they will come out and will worship Me in this place.'

"He also gave him the Covenant of Circumcision, and in this way Abraham became the father of Isaac, whom

## [COMMENTARY]

temporarily in their own land and freely worship therein. Thus their chief ancestor died and his successors for hundreds of years lived without possessing the Holy Land. How, then, could such possession be of supreme importance to those who lived by faith?

**b. IN THE TIME OF JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.****Verses 9-19**

Next to Abraham, Joseph was the greatest Patriarch and at the same time the most perfect prototype of Messiah. But Joseph, it must be recalled, was sold by his own brethren into Egypt and never again lived in his native land. But his sense of the guidance and guardianship of his father's God was all the brighter for this experience, and through it he was able not only to save his own family from famine but also the land of their exile, showing again that it is not the place but the people that is the sole factor of importance. Here Stephen most adroitly and eloquently dwells on the details of the most moving story in all history and carries his audience along in breathless admiration till the tragedy of the brick kilns brings Moses above the horizon. Now, if Joseph and all the Patriarchs of the nation could enjoy the divine companionship and truly worship Jehovah in a strange land and without any temple or outward ritual, why make such a fetich of temporal conditions or places or institutions as though these constituted the essence of the holy religion?

**c. IN THE TIME OF MOSES AND THE EXODUS. Verses 20-38**

So adverse had conditions become in Egypt under a change of dynasty that the royal decree soon went forth for the Hebrews to expose to death all their male infants. Under this decree Moses, the next great figure in Hebrew history, was born, and finally perforce exposed. But so divinely beautiful was the babe and so providentially rescued from death that he was spared as by a miracle through the unparalleled clemency of the royal princess. Thus Stephen leaps from peak to peak, by indirection answering any charge of lacking reverence, much less of blasphemy. Had not Moses, indeed, been rejected by his own people, when on coming to maturity he would champion and save them? Had they not by their own faithlessness and perfidy put off for two generations of forty years each their complete emancipation and entry into

## [TRANSLATION]

he circumcised on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob and Jacob of the twelve Patriarchs."

*b.* IN THE TIME OF JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

Verses 9-19

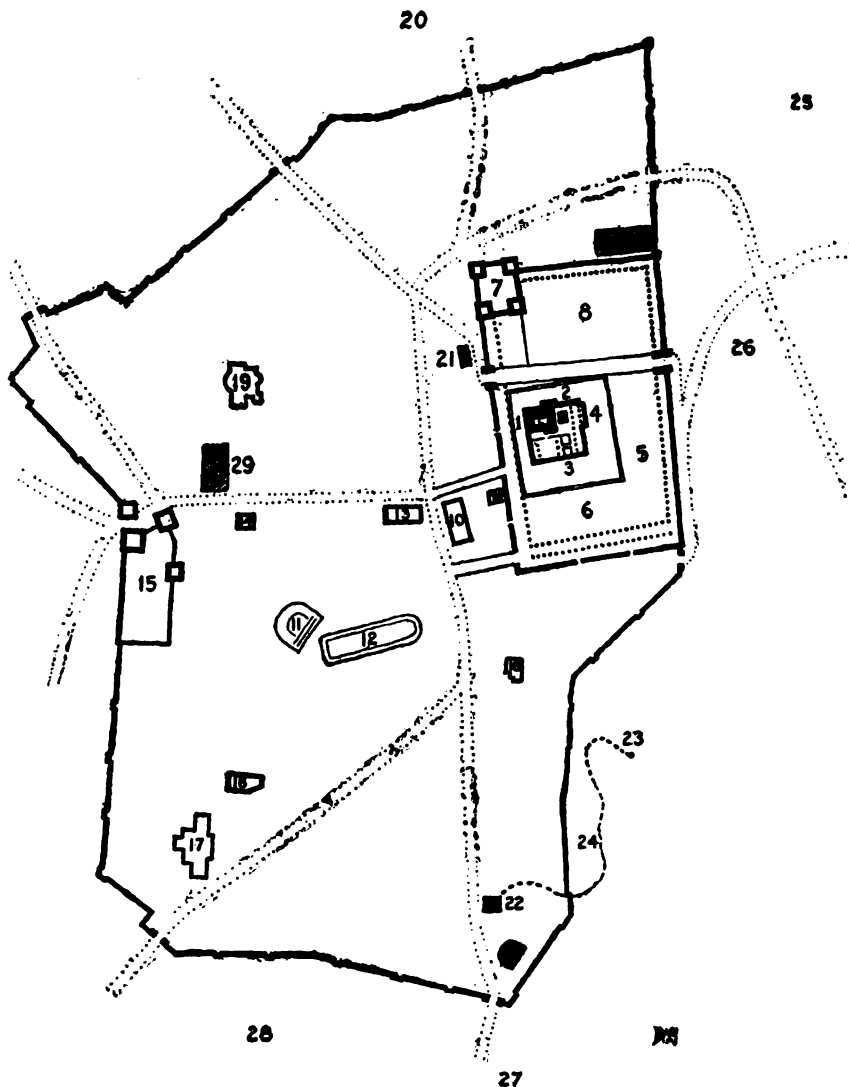
"Now the Patriarchs were jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, King of Egypt, who made him governor over Egypt and over all his own household. Then a famine came over the whole of Egypt and Canaan, bringing great misery, so that our fathers could find no food. Jacob, however, hearing that there was food in Egypt, sent off our fathers for their first visit there. On their second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers and Joseph's race became known to Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and asked his father to come to him, and all his kinsfolk, seventy-five persons in all, and Jacob went down into Egypt. There he and our fathers died, and they were carried over to Shechem and laid in the tomb which Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor at Shechem.

"Now, when the time was approaching for the promise God had made to Abraham the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, till another king who knew nothing of Joseph came to the throne. This king adopted a deceitful policy with our race; he ill-treated our fathers, forcing them to expose their infants, so that they should not survive."

*c.* IN THE TIME OF MOSES AND THE EXODUS. Verses 20-38

"At this time Moses was born. He was a wonder-





### THE JERUSALEM OF THE HERODS

- |                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. The Temple Proper               | 16. Palace of the High Priests       |
| 2. The Great Altar                 | 17. Cenaculum—House of Mark's Mother |
| 3. Hall of The Sanhedrin           | 18. The Palace of Queen Helena       |
| 4. The Beautiful Gate              | 19. Church of the Holy Sepulchre     |
| 5. Solomon's Portico               | 20. Golgotha—The Place of Stoning    |
| 6. The Outer Court                 | 21. The Pool of Bethesda             |
| 7. Castle Antonia                  | 22. Pool of Siloam                   |
| 8. Parade Ground                   | 23. The Virgin Spring                |
| 9. Public Archives                 | 24. Aqueduct                         |
| 10. Xystus—Forum                   | 25. Olivet                           |
| 11. Theatre                        | 26. Kidron                           |
| 12. Hippodrome                     | 27. Akeldamach                       |
| 13. The Hasmonean Palace           | 28. Hinnom                           |
| 14. The Palace of Ananias          | 29. The Pool of Hazzekiah            |
| 15. The Palace of Herod and Pilate |                                      |

## [TRANSLATION]

fully beautiful child, and for three months was brought up in his father's house. But when he was exposed the daughter of Pharaoh adopted him and brought him up as her own son. So Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and was an able man in words and deeds.

"Now, when he had completed his fortieth year it came into his mind to visit his brothers the sons of Israel. And seeing one of them ill-treated, he took his part and avenged the man who had been wronged by striking down the Egyptian. He supposed his brothers would understand that God was using him to deliver them, but they did not understand. Again the next day he came upon two of them fighting and tried to make peace between them. 'Men,' he said, 'you are brothers; why should you injure one another?' But the man who was wronging his fellow workman pushed Moses aside.

"'Who made you,' he asked, 'ruler and judge over us? You do not wish to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday, do you?'

"At that remark Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where two sons were born to him.

"At the end of forty years, there appeared to him an angel in the desert of Mount Sinai, in the flames of a burning bush. And he when he saw it wondered at the sight, and proceeding a bit nearer, heard the voice of the Lord speak out,

"'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.'

"And Moses became so frightened that he did not dare to look. But the Lord said to him:

"'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place

## [COMMENTARY]

Canaan? Here again the orator's touches of striking fantasy light up and vivify the portrait. Moses's high learning, his prowess in debate and in the battlefield, his chivalric project to head a racial revolt against the crown, and his compulsory flight because of the taunting threat of one of his fellow nationals, all tend to throw the most commonplace traditions of Hebrew history into new and startling perspective and to compel thoughtful if not favorable consideration. Here again, as in the cases of Abraham and Jacob and Joseph, exceptional favor from on high was shown to Moses while in exile in Midian, where his two sons were born, where the vision of Holy Ground beneath a burning thorn bush was his temple, and where he afterward, even on the smoking crater of Sinai, came to know Jehovah face to face. Yet, note how Stephen closes the paragraph with five resounding blasts, beginning the five clauses from verse 35 on: "that very Moses" . . . "this very man" . . . "this is the man" . . . "this is the Moses" . . . and "this is the man," contrasting alternately God's high esteem of him with the low esteem of his own generation. Can a man who speaks with such fervid eloquence about the nation's Lawgiver be charged with wanting in appreciation of that Lawgiver?

## d. IN THE TIME OF AARON AND THE MURMURINGS.

## Verses 39-44

Finally, Moses the unselfish deliverer, even redeemer of his race, who at the end of his course prophesied that its ultimate redemption should be wrought out by his spiritual antitype, even Messiah, "Our fathers were not willing to obey, but pushed him aside" as the brick-maker had in Egypt, asking in the very same words the impertinent question, "Who made you ruler over us?" while Aaron, whom Moses had made High Priest, they invited to set up Bull-worship, such as they had seen and been taught to abhor in Egypt. They even said these blasphemous words about Moses as the Holy Writings have preserved against them, namely, while he was in Horeb receiving further laws from Jehovah, "As for this man who led us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him!" And Aaron, the High Priest, was their willing tool, and so were other chief elders among them! Surely, the Almighty could do no less with such traitors than to strike them with leprosy and even sudden death, or than what He later said, by His gifted prophet Amos, He would do to those who worshiped the

## [TRANSLATION]

on which you are standing is holy ground. Most assuredly I have seen the oppression of my people in Egypt; I also heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. So now come and I will send you into Egypt.'

"That very Moses whom they had rejected when they said, 'Who made you a ruler and judge?'—this very man God sent to be a ruler and deliverer with the hand of the angel who had appeared to him in the bush. This is the man who led them out after he had done wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea, and in the desert forty years. This is the man who said to the sons of Israel,

"'GOD WILL RAISE YOU UP A PROPHET FROM YOUR BROTHERS, AS HE RAISED ME' (Deut. xviii, 15, 18).

"This is the man who intervened at the assembly in the desert between the angel that used to talk with him in Mount Sinai and our fathers, who received living words to be given unto us."

*d. IN THE TIME OF AARON AND THE MURMURINGS.**Verses 39-44*

"But our fathers were not willing to obey him; they pushed him aside in their hearts and turned back to Egypt. They said to Aaron,

"'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him.'

"They even made a calf at that time, and brought sacrifice to the idol, and kept rejoicing in the works which their own hands had made. But God turned away from them and handed them over to serve the Host of Heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets,

## [COMMENTARY]

bulls at Bethel and at Dan, drive them like chaff into the remotest exile beyond Babylon. Has the Hebrew nation ever appreciated or listened to its deliverers or heaven-sent teachers until it had first rejected and killed them? Did they not make the tabernacle a tent of Moloch and of the Temple a house of the Host of Heaven?

*e.* IN THE TIME OF JOSHUA AND THE KINGS. Verses 45-50

While in the desert Moses superintended the gathering of materials and their beautiful coordination and erection into a pavilion gorgeous beyond the dream of any Arabian king. Its textures, colors, measurements, and varied materials each had particular significance, carefully copied after the spiritual model which appeared in his Sinai visions, and not a little influenced by his memories of Egyptian temples and their furnishings. But it was the spiritual lessons it bodied forth which were important, and these all fell as good seed upon stony ground. Though Joshua had been at Moses's right hand from his earliest Egyptian years, and was so fortunate as to escape every criticism and with Caleb to enter into and lead in the conquest of Canaan, yet both these veterans gave their later years almost wholly to personal aggrandizement, and, having set up the Levitical Tabernacle and priesthood at Shiloh, themselves settled at points distant from that center, and so little of honor came either to it or to Jehovah's name until the times of David. Why this paragraph is so brief, and especially why no mention is made of Samuel, is doubtless due to Stephen's perception that the patience of his audience cannot stand much longer strain. Only a single line is given to the ideal personage, hero king of every Jewish household, great David, and even he never enjoyed nor was permitted even to build the Temple his heart so fondly desired. Thus during all the long centuries from Abraham to Solomon no permanent place nor habitation was associated as by necessity with divine worship; and when at last the climax of that proud history was reached as a separate nation and a world capital and court and Temple, with its hundreds of priests and Levites and musicians and servitors, was achieved, even Solomon in all his wisdom and glory could not save the people from immediate disruption and decline, so that the moment of Israel's highest success was also that of its complete collapse as a spiritual commonwealth. For God does not dwell in human structures. Such buildings are more likely to be hindrances than helps to spiritual worship, un-

[TRANSLATION]

"DID YOU OFFER ME SLAIN BEASTS AND SACRIFICES,  
FORTY YEARS IN THE DESERT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?  
YOU REALLY RAISED UP THE TENT OF MOLOCH  
AND THE STAR OF THE GOD REPHAN;  
THOSE WERE THE IDOLS WHICH YOU MADE TO  
WORSHIP;  
THEREFORE I WILL EXILE YOU BEYOND BABYLON'  
(Amos v, 25-27).

"Our fathers had the Tent of the Testimony in the desert as directed by Him, who told Moses to build it after the model which he had seen."

c. IN THE TIME OF JOSHUA AND THE KINGS.

Verses 45-50

"When they had received it our fathers brought it in as they took possession with Joshua of the land of the Gentiles whom God drove out before them. So it continued down to the days of David. He found favor with God and asked permission to provide a dwelling for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands: just as the Prophet declares:

"HEAVEN IS MY THRONE  
AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL FOR MY FEET.  
WHAT HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD ME? SAITH THE  
LORD,  
OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR ME TO SETTLE DOWN?  
DID NOT MY HAND MAKE ALL THESE THINGS?" "  
(Isaiah lxvi, 1, 2).

## [COMMENTARY]

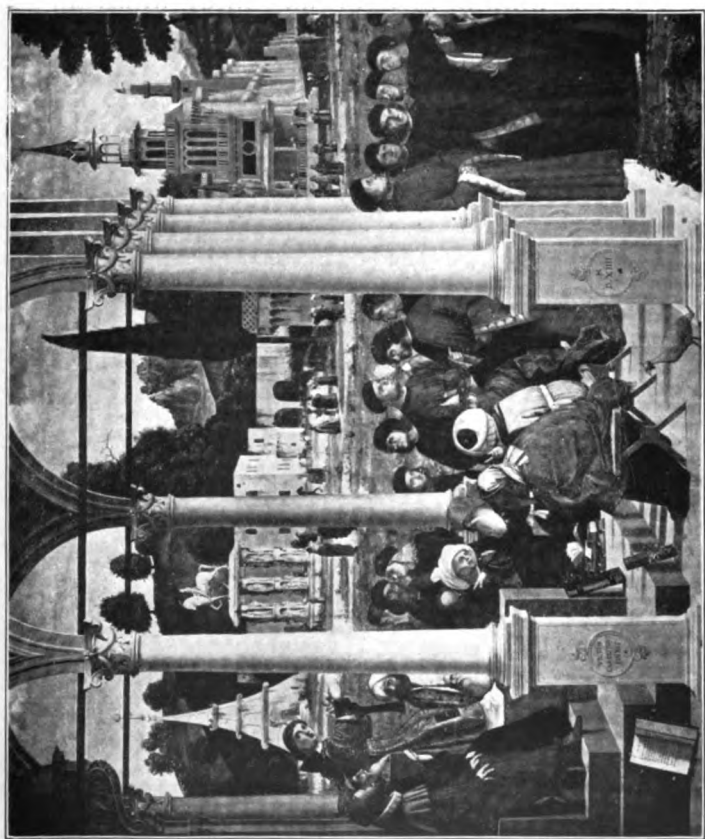
less the chastened mind and heart keep clearly in view their temporary, and symbolical limitations, and humbly use them as mounting stones to unseen realities. Isaiah, the Abraham, Moses, Solomon of the exiled and most fruitful period of all their history, had told them this; and so had Hosea and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and a host of faithful and fearless prophets, who set small store by outward pomp and ceremony, for God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

*f.* IN THE TIME OF MESSIAH HIMSELF. Verses 51-53

Stephen sees that he will be granted but a moment more. He drives his sword to its very hilt. You, you are true sons of your sires—you revert to type, as surely as the needle seeks the pole. Circumcised you verily are, but only in flesh and name—your hearts are utterly impenitent; you never knew a moment of sincere worship. Like fathers, like sons; you seek to silence by assassination the voices you cannot answer, just as did they always. Yours the Patriarchs, yours the Law, yours the Temple, yours the Prophets, and to what end? You have no mind for the messages of your Prophets; your Temple is the house of Mammon; your Patriarchs walked by Faith, but you by sight; though you received the Law at the hands of angels, you have not kept one jot nor tittle.

**Paragraph 2. STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM.** Verses 54-60.

Saul can endure no more. Even Gamaliel does nothing to stem their mad frenzy. With one impulse the throng rushes in mob violence upon its victim, the young fanatic from Tarsus in the lead. But Stephen stands rapt in ecstatic vision. He sees beyond mortal sight. The entire Godhead appears to sanction his view of Israel's shortcoming. The Spirit fully possesses his soul. The Father sits on His throne of judgment, and the Son stands ready to welcome him to glory. Saul hears and can never shake from his memory those last words as Stephen testifies to the divine approval. Demon-driven, however, all stop their ears, and falling upon their prey, easily overbear and drag him outside the city gate. Murder by stoning was the ecclesiastical and merciful type of release then in vogue, and Saul, younger than the foremost hierarchs and better able to keep up with the mob, unctuously takes his stand on a hillock near by, and in the name of his elders gives



STEPHEN'S ADDRESS TO THE SANHEDRIN





## [TRANSLATION]

**f. IN THE TIME OF MESSIAH HIMSELF. Verses 51-53**

"You stiff-necked race, uncircumcised in heart and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit. As it was with your fathers so is it with you. Which of the Prophets did not your fathers persecute? They even killed those who told long beforehand the coming of the Just One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become! You who received the Law ordained by the angels and yet have not kept it!"

**Paragraph 2. STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM. Verses 54-60.**

While listening to these words they became frantic with rage and gnashed their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, looked steadily toward Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand.

"Look," he said, "I see Heaven opening wide, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

But with a loud shout they stopped their ears. All rushed with one impulse upon him, dragged him outside the city, and began to stone him, the witnesses throwing off their garments and casting them at the feet of a young man called Saul. Thus they stoned Stephen while he kept calling on the Lord and saying,

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Then rising on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge this sin against them."

And when he had said this he fell asleep. Now Saul was one of those who fully approved of his murder.

## [COMMENTARY]

official sanction and oversight to the scene. Thus he has to hear, his eyes riveted on that angelic face, still further blasphemy. The man keeps calling on Jesus as Lord—he commends his spirit to the same Jesus as though He were God. He even rises when in the throes of death upon his knees and pleads that this killing may not be counted as sin against his executioners, nor especially against him who has formally assumed all responsibility. Finally the stones have done their work; the peerless soul has been released. The voice is silenced at last, the eyes lose their luster and the shining face relaxes as in sleep.

How merciless an historian is Luke!—on the soul of Saul rests the guilt of the martyrdom of Stephen.

**B. THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION—  
CHAPTERS VIII-XII**

**FROM THE PERSECUTION BY THE SANHEDRIN TO THAT  
BY HEROD AGRIPPA I. A. D. 33 TO A. D. 44**

## CHAPTER VIII

### GENERAL PERSECUTION AND DISPERSION OF THE CHURCH

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. STEPHEN'S BURIAL. Verses 1-3.**

This chapter brings us to the inevitable outburst of persecution which has long been preparing. But so greatly respected and at the same time feared are the Apostles that when the Deacons and Evangelists and lesser ministers of the Word are driven from the capital to the provinces those courageous men remain there in comparative safety. The arch persecutor, strange to say, is now Gamaliel's young favorite, Saul of Tarsus. With the bitter zeal of a neophyte, though a Pharisee of the strictest sort, he outdoes the most advanced partisan of the usually far more ruthless and unscrupulous Sadducees. It is highly significant that not even women are exempt from the shame of public arrest and imprisonment, and doubtless this fact confirms and is consistent with the frequent evidence which Luke gives both in Acts and in his Gospel of their prominence and ability in connection with the new movement. But the severer the local conflagration the wider the fire-brands were blown, and Samaria, as well as all Judæa, reaped the benefit. Thus the plan of campaign laid down by their Commander in His last interview was being advanced by the unintentioned co-operation of the enemy. The original company of one hundred twenty had tarried in Jerusalem until the Paraclete had come, and under His power, which they severally shared, they had borne bold and effective testimony to the resurrection and ascension, and therefore divine nature and sovereignty, of the Nazarene. Miraculous proofs had already convinced thousands of the truth of their claims, and these with thousands more had experienced the higher miracle of personal regeneration and emancipation from sin, until now the time is ripe to advance in ever-widening circles to the uttermost parts.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GENERAL PERSECUTION AND DISPERSION OF THE CHURCH

[TRANSLATION]

#### **Paragraph 1. STEPHEN'S BURIAL. Verses 1-3.**

On that very day there burst upon the church in Jerusalem a great persecution, and all except the Apostles were scattered throughout Judæa and Samaria. Meanwhile devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. Saul, however, cruelly ravaged the Church, entering into house after house, dragging out both men and women, and committing them to prison.

#### **Paragraph 2. PHILIP'S EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY. Verses 4-40.**

##### *a. TO THE SAMARITANS. Verses 4-25*

Those, therefore, who were scattered in different directions went from place to place telling the good news of the Word. Thus Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ there. And the crowds all kept attentively listening in sympathy with what Philip was telling them and watching the miracles he was doing. For there were many of those who had unclean spirits where the demon would come out with a loud cry, and many paralytics and lame persons were cured. Thus there was great joy in that city. Now there had been a man named Simon for some time in the city, who had

## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 2. PHILIP'S EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY.**  
Verses 4-40.**a. TO THE SAMARITANS. Verses 4-25**

Philip, who stood next in rank to Stephen, the martyr, leads the advance upon Samaria, going directly to the capital of that very prosperous and influential province just north of Judæa. His distinctive work as Deacon, or distributor of support to the widows of the mother church, was now merged in the greater one of preaching Christ and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. No doubt the other Deacons spread into other communities, and Philip's case, like Peter's for the Apostles, is only given as a type of the rest. Philip was evidently a very able man, head of a large household, having four daughters who later succeeded him as active Evangelists, and from his place and work in Luke's record, his great success in Samaria, ease in intercourse with the Ethiopian chamberlain, use of the Scriptures, the sweep of his circuit and final settlement and influence in the Roman capital, Cæsarea, must be ranked among the notable and worthy propagators of early Christianity. Beside his gift as a preacher, Philip possessed full power as a miraculous healer and exorciser of demons. By the exercise of all these agencies he stirred dissolute Samaria to its very foundations.

Here for the first of many times in this book we come upon the baleful influence of magic and magicians of the first century. As we cross Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece we shall realize that the kingdom of evil found this arm, next to priestly fanaticism, its most potent agency in embarrassing the Kingdom of Truth. Dr. Ramsay says: "There is no class of opponents with whom the earliest Christian Apostles and missionaries are brought into collision so frequently and whose opposition is described as being so obstinate and determined as the magicians. . . . At Samaria, at Paphos, at Philippi, and repeatedly at Ephesus, wizards of various kinds meet and are overcome by Peter and Paul" (Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament, p. 113).

It appears that Simon of Samaria was one of the most gifted and powerful of his class. He had gained such great vogue and influence over the people that they had come to speak of him as the "Great Power of God," a title peculiarly blasphemous to those

## [TRANSLATION]

been practicing magic and mystifying the Samaritans, pretending that he was some great personality; and all sorts of people, both high and low, kept listening attentively to him, saying,

"This man is the great power of God."

They used to listen to him so attentively because he had bewildered them by his magic arts for so long. When, however, they believed Philip, who was preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and about the name of Jesus Christ, they kept coming to be baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed also, and when he had been baptized he kept close to Philip and, gazing at the signs and mighty miracles which were occurring, was constantly filled with amazement. When the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who when they had come down prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had not fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them and they constantly received the Holy Spirit. Simon, however, when he saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, offered them money, and said,

"Give me also this authority, so that every one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Peter replied to him:

"May your money go to destruction with you! because you thought that the free gift of God could be bought with money. There is no part nor lot in this matter for you; your heart is not sincere in the sight of God. Therefore repent of this your wickedness and beseech the



## [COMMENTARY]

who had received from the Father the promise and power of the Holy Spirit. Though Simon had ability to work certain wonders, and even miracles of a kind, yet he and the Samaritans soon perceived that Philip far surpassed him even on his own ground, and the sorcerer dropped from his high position to one of comparative insignificance; indeed, he actually took the place of penitent with the multitude and seemed sincere in his acceptance of the new faith, submitting to baptism and keeping close to Philip with the constancy of a genuine neophyte. That his conversion was only superficial is seen from the fact of his utter inability to understand the secret sources or operation of the extraordinary influence exerted in all directions by Philip and his coadjutors.

The movement in Samaria finally reaches such proportions that word is carried to Jerusalem and they at once send down Peter and John to conserve and coordinate its results with reference to the standards prevailing in the mother church. The only thing Peter and John could suggest was a clearer conception and experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit, such as had come to them at Pentecost and had been repeatedly renewed at every rising crisis or moment of farther advancement in the Jewish capital. By prayer and the laying on of hands they imparted the heavenly gift to those truly believing, and although his curiosity was satisfied Simon's cupidity was only stirred up the more. Failing to perceive the spiritual element which transfused the minds and hearts of those receiving the new gift of power, Simon supposed that the Apostles had transferred by the mere imposition of their hands that power. "He thought," Dr. Ramsay says, "that these teachers belonged to the same class as himself, and that they aimed at influence and a career with wealth as the ultimate reward. They possessed a knowledge and a power that he coveted, and he proposed to learn from them at a great fee, so that they might pass him rapidly over the earlier stages and carry him quickly to the highest stage of initiation. . . . He had caught the language of the new teaching; but he had no conception what was the meaning of that term 'Holy Spirit' which he used." (*Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pp. 123, 124).

Peter and John now see that they have a case of moral depravity akin to that of Ananias and are only less severe in their judgment of it because they perceive how vast is the abyss of irresponsible ignorance from which the proposal springs. Hotly rejecting it, therefore, they strongly urge the magician to humble penitence

## [TRANSLATION]

Lord if possibly the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I perceive that you have fallen into bitter jealousy and are in bondage to iniquity."

"You yourselves pray to the Lord for me," replied Simon, "so that nothing of which you have spoken may come upon me."

So then the Apostles, after delivering their testimony and preaching the Word of the Lord, set out on their way to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel at the same time to many of the Samaritan villages.

**b. TO THE ETHIOPIAN PASHA. Verses 26-38**

But an angel of the Lord said to Philip,

"Arise and go toward the south along the road which runs down from Jerusalem to Gaza, that is, the desert route."

So he arose and began his journey. Now he came upon an official of high rank, a chamberlain in the service of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was her treasurer, and had been to Jerusalem and was on his way back. Sitting in his chariot he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip,

"Go up and join that chariot."

So Philip as he ran up heard him reading aloud Isaiah the prophet.

"Can you really understand the passage you are reading?" he inquired.

"How is it possible for me," answered the eunuch, "unless some-one shall guide me?" And he urgently asked Philip to get up and sit beside him. Now, the passage of scripture which he was reading was this:

## [COMMENTARY]

and prayer for forgiveness and salvation, lest he perish with his own bribe. That he does not yet fathom either the enormity of his error nor the peril to his soul is seen from his shallow reply, as well as the fact that nothing further is recorded of the incident. The Apostles, having inspected, sanctioned, and confirmed the work of Philip, return to Jerusalem by slow stages, stopping at many Samaritan towns to preach and evangelize on the way.

**b. TO THE ETHIOPIAN PASHA. Verses 26-38**

Philip's angel now bids him also depart and make a somewhat extended tour through the uplands and plains of Lower Sharon and Upper Philistia. The chief incident which Luke chooses to emphasize, since it serves to illustrate the main purpose of his book, namely, the widespread and early diffusion of the gospel, is Philip's interview with the Ethiopian chamberlain. It is clear that this personage, no doubt a man of marked force and influence in his own country, would not have traveled so far for the purpose of worshipping Jehovah unless he had a profound conviction, if not vital faith, resting on the solid basis of Old Testament teaching. This is especially shown by his possession of the great prophet Isaiah, and his endeavor to read and understand the document while riding along homeward in his comfortable chariot. Prompted by the Spirit, Philip accosts the traveler with a leading and attention-compelling question as to whether he understood the purport of the passage he was reading aloud. That he was neither a thoroughbred Jew, nor even a proselyte, appears to be a proper implication from his reply. In any case, he gathered from the earnest face and word of his inquirer that Philip has asked it, as the Greek shows, anticipating a negative reply and wishing to throw light upon the passage. The Ethiopian stops, cordially invites the Evangelist to mount beside him, and gives Philip the opportunity he sought. Beginning, therefore, with the passage in question, he shows both its prophetic significance and its only possible fulfillment in the person and mission of Messiah himself, and then declares that Jesus the Nazarene, and no other man, was the literal fulfillment of the passage they had been reading. So convincing was the persuasive logic of Philip that his auditor appears fully satisfied, and as they drove by an inviting pool in the plain he asked to be baptized into the new faith. Of course Philip was overjoyed to seal the interview in this manner.

[TRANSLATION]

“LIKE A SHEEP HE WAS LED OFF TO SLAUGHTER,  
AND JUST AS A LAMB IS DUMB BEFORE THE SHEARER,  
SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH.  
IN HIS HUMILIATION JUSTICE WAS REFUSED HIM;  
WHO SHALL TELL THE STORY OF HIS POSTERITY?  
FOR HIS LIFE IS CUT OFF FROM THE EARTH”

(Isa. liii, 7-8).



AZOTUS, ASHDOD

“I pray you,” asked the chamberlain of Philip, “about whom is the prophet saying this, about himself or about some one else?”

Then Philip began to speak, and starting with that same scripture, preached to him the gospel of Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the chamberlain said:

“Look, here is water! What is there to hinder me from being baptized?” (verse 37 not in the Greek). So he

## [COMMENTARY]

## C. TO THE COAST CITIES. Verses 39, 40

Having performed this rite of initiation, Philip considered his work done, and under the Spirit's impulse crossed the Philistian Plain to Ashdod (Azotus), where he continued his evangelical activities, and from thence, moving on from town to town, he finally reached his own city, Cæsarea.

## [TRANSLATION]

directed the chariot to stop and they both alighted at the water, Philip and the chamberlain, and he baptized him.

*c. TO THE COAST CITIES. Verses 39, 40*

When, however, they came up from the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip, and the chamberlain saw him no more, for he continued his journey rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and proceeding from thence he preached the gospel in every city until he came to Cæsarea.

## CHAPTER IX

### SAUL'S CONVERSION AND ITS EFFECTS

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. SAUL'S ROLE AS PERSECUTOR. Verses 1-4.**

In the ninth chapter we reach the record of what was in many respects the most extraordinary single conquest of the Holy Spirit in the Apostolic or any other age. Luke himself has such deep appreciation of this event that he includes three separate accounts of it in his brief book. At the beginning of the passage we have Saul, a bigoted persecutor, leading the worst element in Jerusalem in those outbursts which had carried great Stephen to an ignominious martyrdom, only second in point of shame to that of his Galilean Master, and had driven like a whirlwind from Jerusalem the hundreds of able leaders and teachers of the new faith. In the end this same sincere man is transformed into just as earnest an advocate of the opposite view, giving all the powers of his gifted soul to restore the faith and its faithful representation to their earliest and loftiest expression both in Damascus and in Jerusalem. Taking it all in all, such a conversion is the most convincing proof of the divine source of the religion of Jesus that can be desired or demanded. The psychology of Saul's intellectual attitude toward the claims of Christ both before and after his experience on the Damascus road is by no means inexplicable. The attitude of the Lord's brothers toward Him before and after the day of His resurrection is of the same sort. It is at least clear that the same intense devotion carries over to the new cause in the case of Saul, and makes of an indefatigable persecutor an irresistible advocate. The fact of the vision is attested by the transformation effected. It cannot be minimized without impugning the mental integrity not only of Paul but also of Luke and of the three select audiences referred to, who give it unquestioned credence. As a proof of the resurrection Saul classes his interview with Christ along with those granted to Peter, James, and the five hundred in Galilee.

#### **Paragraph 2. SAUL'S ROLE AS SUPPLIANT. Verses 5-9.**

So deeply disciplined was Saul's mind that he recognized at once his own abject error and the sovereign rights of his arresting Lord.



ANANIAS RESTORES SAUL'S SIGHT





## CHAPTER IX

### SAUL'S CONVERSION AND ITS EFFECTS

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. SAUL'S ROLE AS PERSECUTOR. Verses 1-4.**

Meantime Saul, still uttering threats of death against the disciples of the Lord, went to the High Priest and besought him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he should find there any persons of the Way, either men or women, he might bring them in chains to Jerusalem. And he was on his way, getting near to Damascus, when suddenly there flashed about him a light from the sky, upon which he fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice which said to him,

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

**Paragraph 2. SAUL'S ROLE AS SUPPLIANT. Verses 5-9.**

"Who are you, Lord?" he said.

"I am Jesus," was the reply, "whom you are persecuting. But rise up now and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

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[COMMENTARY]

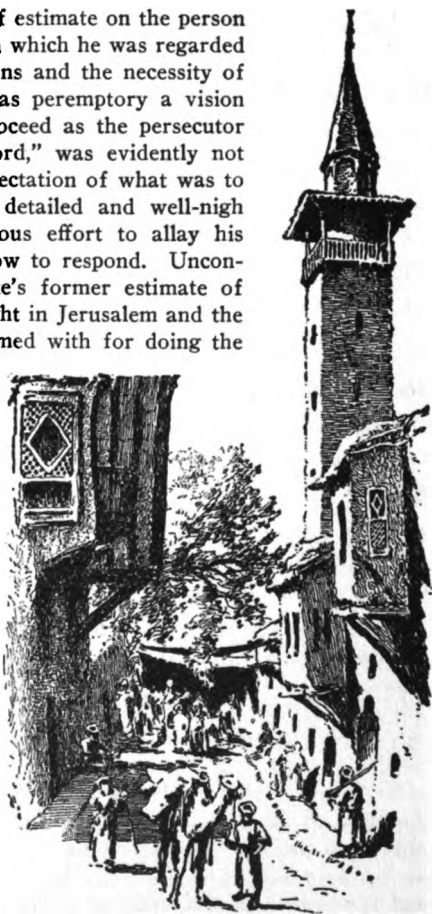
The voice he heard unequivocally charges him twice with directing his personal spleen against none other than Messiah himself. Moreover, the Master appears to expect Saul to recognize in the name "Jesus" an identity with the expected Messiah, not needing any prolonged pleading. The testimony of Stephen had been peculiarly clear in this respect, and Peter never failed to stress this same point, so that Saul was without excuse. He sees it now in the flash of the heavenly vision and his vibrant soul responds like that of a princely knight who is to the manner born. He bows to the very dust. He inquires the will of his Sovereign. He is not disobedient to the heavenly vision. It blots out the sight of Damascus and dulls his physical senses and appetites for days, but

## [COMMENTARY]

at last he sees eternal verities clearly and his new Captain face to face.

**Paragraph 3. SAUL'S ROLE AS CATECHUMEN. Verses 10-18.**

We get another angle of estimate on the person of Saul from the terror in which he was regarded by the Damascus Christians and the necessity of Ananias's receiving just as peremptory a vision and command how to proceed as the persecutor himself. "I am here, Lord," was evidently not uttered with the least expectation of what was to follow. Even after the detailed and well-nigh apologetic, if not humorous effort to allay his fears, Ananias is very slow to respond. Unconsciously he confirms Luke's former estimate of the havoc Saul had wrought in Jerusalem and the high authority he was armed with for doing the like in Damascus. To this the Lord must reply in terms of further reassurance and act the part of patron and sponsor, telling Ananias that he who for the present is widely known as persecutor shall soon be a suffering martyr for the sake of his newly acknowledged Master and King. The four staccato lines beginning verse 17 reflect the rapid response of Ananias, and soon he gets the true state of the situation before his mind. Indeed, the entire scene at Straight Street is also crowded into the



**STRAIGHT STREET, DAMASCUS**

## [TRANSLATION]

The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Then Saul got up from the ground, but though his eyes were wide open, he could see nothing. So they took his hand and led him to Damascus. For three days he could see nothing, neither did he eat nor drink.

**Paragraph 3. SAUL'S ROLE AS CATECHUMEN. Verses 10-18.**

Now there was at Damascus a disciple called Ananias, and the Lord spoke to him in a vision,

"Ananias!"

He answered, "I am here, Lord."

"Rise," said the Lord, "and go to the street called Straight Street and inquire at the house of Judas for a man named Saul, from Tarsus. He is even now praying, and has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands upon him so that he might recover sight."

"But, Lord," Ananias replied, "I have heard from a great many about that man, how much harm he has done to Thy saints at Jerusalem. And he has authority here too from the High Priests to put into chains all who are calling upon Thy name."

The Lord replied, however,

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[COMMENTARY]

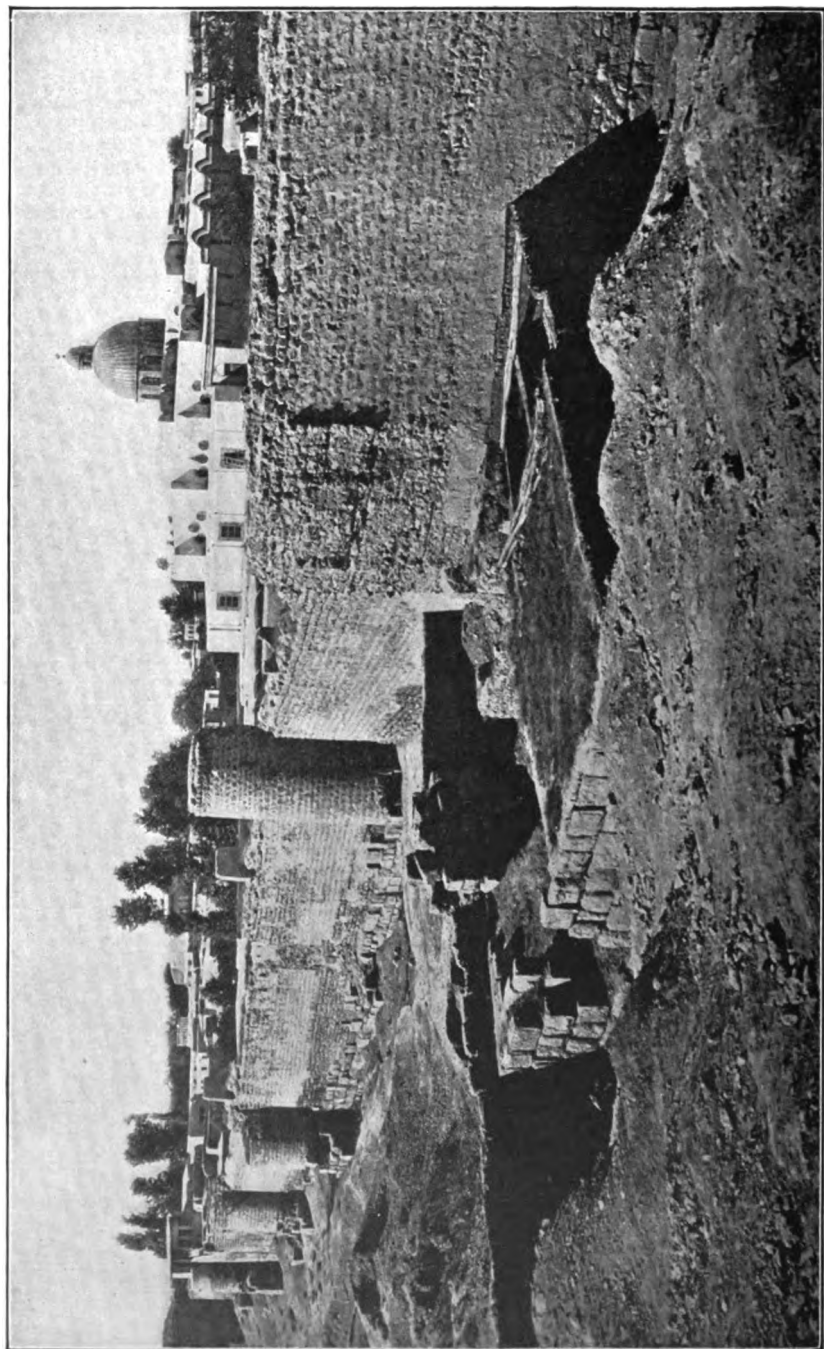
four clauses following, and only after sealing the visit in baptism both with water and the Holy Spirit does the Damascus disciple appear to breathe again freely. The love feast, or eucharist, in which food is taken by both Ananias and Saul, marks the beginning of a new era for both.

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 4. SAUL'S ROLE AS DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.**  
Verses 19-30.

Saul's intense nature could not remain inactive, and at once he turned all his powers into the service of the new Way. This astonished his new friends only less than it did those whom he had come to rid of this pestilent heresy. Scales now fell from the eyes of both these parties. No more mighty champion of the central position of Apostolic preaching had been heard in Damascus, although that city had evidently become one of the chief points in the Diaspora for the propagation of Christian doctrine. "Jesus is the Son of God," and "Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah," are now the ringing claims which the very arch enemy of those tenets had come to Damascus to tear out root and branch. He sets the synagogues on fire with the very torch he had brought to work desolation among the attic-hiding refugees of the Nazarene. And this follower of Gamaliel, trained from birth in the strictest knowledge of the letter of the sacred oracle, now that his mind is illumined by the Holy Spirit, marshals such infallible proofs in support of his new faith that speechless bewilderment falls upon the large Jewish colony at Damascus. Of course Saul's zealous and able labors brought welcome results in widening the influence of the new sect, but there were obvious disadvantages, for the powers of evil were compelled in sheer desperation to organize a much more able opposition, and this meant constant fighting in the open field. For some reason Saul soon went into temporary retreat, for we accept the view that his "going away into Arabia," mentioned in his letter to the Galatians 1, 17 (compare 2 Corinthians xi, 32, 33), took place soon after his conversion. It stands to reason that a nature so deeply steeped in Pharisaic prejudices and general outlook would need a period of special training, or at least close reading and profound contemplation and prayer before undertaking as a life work the role of defender of the faith which he had endeavored to destroy. As the period of "three years" mentioned in Galatians was intended to cover the whole absence of Saul from Jerusalem at this epoch, it is not necessary to make his Arabian experience much more than twelve months. (See Lumby's Cambridge Bible, *ad loc.*) The period of activity following Saul's return from Arabia, at verse 23, was evidently longer than that which preceded it, and as their protagonist was so much better equipped as to be well-nigh irresistible in open conflict, the unbelieving Jews resorted to the





WALL OF DAMASCUS—TRADITIONAL SITE OF PAUL'S ESCAPE

## [TRANSLATION]

"Go forward, for this very man is a chosen instrument of Mine to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings, as well as the house of Israel, for I will show him how much he has to suffer on account of My name."

Then Ananias went, entered the house, laid his hands upon Saul, and said,

"Saul, my brother, the Lord, namely, Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me, in order that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

At once there dropped from his eyes something like scales, and he saw again, and standing up was baptized.

**Paragraph 4. SAUL'S ROLE AS DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.**  
Verses 19-30.

Then he remained for several days with the disciples at Damascus, and at once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. Every-one that heard him was astonished and began to inquire,

"Is not this the man who at Jerusalem tried to destroy those calling upon this name, and had come for the very purpose of carrying them off in chains unto the High Priests?"

But Saul's spiritual strength kept increasing, and he continued to bewilder the Jews that lived in Damascus by the proofs he was giving that Jesus was the Christ.

After a number of days had passed the Jews plotted together to kill Saul, but he came to know their plan. They even kept watching the gates day and night in order to murder him, but his disciples took him one night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. Thus he reached Jerusalem and tried



## [COMMENTARY]

satanic method of secret assassination. From this moment until his final martyrdom we will find our new Apostle a constant object of organized religious race hatred on the part of "the world-rulers of this darkness." Was it not to equip himself for this conflict that the Arabian withdrawal was wisely invested? But Saul made friends not less tenacious than his enemies, and through their counterplot he escapes and returns finally to Jerusalem. Here he throws himself with characteristic fervor into restoring the breaches he had made in the mother church, but the very mention of his name is enough to bring his motives into question until noble-minded Barnabas, acting as personal sponsor, allays all suspicion. But here again, as at Damascus, the persecutors he had formerly led persecute the arch persecutor, and those he formerly persecuted now save him. His ambition to remain in Jerusalem and fight his enemies into submission is neither now nor ever afterwards favored, and this fact has large part no doubt in his needing another period of retreat and meditation, this time in his native city, Tarsus, before he is fully ready for his new career.

**Paragraph 5. PERIOD OF PROSPERITY THROUGHOUT PALESTINE. Verses 31-43.**

**a. PETER AT LYDDA HEALS ÆNEAS. Verses 31-35**

Verse 31 introduces a paragraph of transition summing up the general condition of the Church, at the end of its period of expansion among the Jews, both orthodox and proselyte, throughout Palestine, and looking forward to its wider extension unto "the uttermost parts."

As in the opening epoch Peter was the chosen and accepted leader, so now the historian places him foremost in the initial steps to usher in the chief business of the book. By easy yet rapid advance he himself is transformed from a narrow and somewhat bigoted partisan of exclusiveness to a liberal and eloquent exponent of the extension of grace "unto the Gentiles also." It is the key which Peter carries that turns the lock and opens the door not alone at Jerusalem and Samaria but now at the provincial Roman seat of government, Cæsarea. Dr. Paley and others think that Josephus (*Antiquities*, XIII, viii, 2) warrants the opinion that the cause of the period of peace for the church was that their enemies had to turn all their attention against the Emperor Caligula, whose effort

## [TRANSLATION]

to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Barnabas, however, took him and brought him to the Apostles, and told them how Saul on this journey had seen the Lord, who had spoken with him, and how he had taught fearlessly in the name of Jesus at Damascus. Thus Saul stayed with them in Jerusalem, going in and out and speaking fearlessly in the name of the Lord, and he frequently talked and had debates with the Hellenists. But they kept trying to take his life. The brothers, however, knew this, and took him down to Cæsarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

**Paragraph 5. PERIOD OF PROSPERITY THROUGHOUT PALESTINE. Verses 31-43.**

**a. PETER AT LYDDA HEALS ÆNEAS. Verses 31-35**

Thus the church had peace throughout the whole of Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became well established and was constantly growing in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Now, as Peter was traveling about through all

## [COMMENTARY]

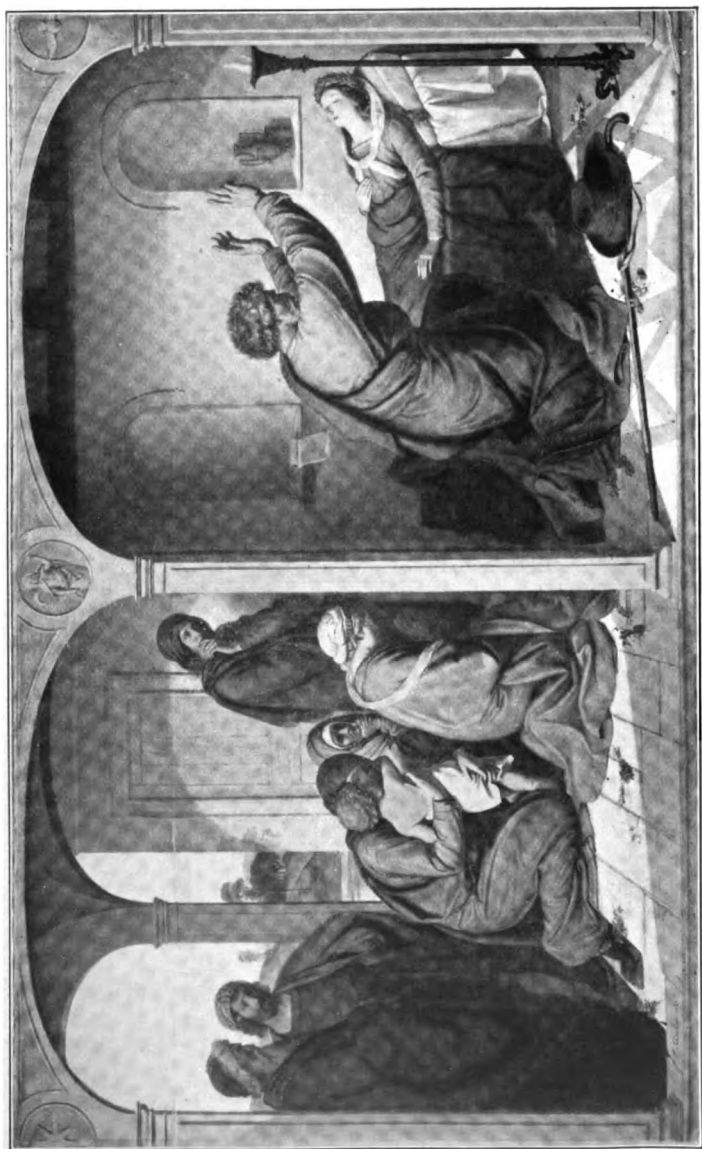
to rear his own statue in the Temple about this time, they barely averted by the aid of their local patron King Agrippa. Luke leads up to the well-nigh miraculous incident of the removal of scales from Peter's eyes by two episodes of marked interest disclosing him in the role of his Master "going about doing good." First he visits the saints in the beautiful town Lydda on the Plain of Sharon. The use of this formal term of "the saints" as in verse 13 and verse 41 tends to confirm the state of settled success which had come upon Judæa. The mention of Æneas's period of sickness—eight years—together with his apparent faith, which does not need either mention or encouragement, may imply that he was one of

## [COMMENTARY]

the earliest believers of Jesus's own ministry in Judæa, now about eight years past. Does not the Greek Æneas also suggest that we have here, as in the case of Dorcas, who was also not a recent convert, though of Greek environment, a certain preparation for Peter's vision soon to follow? The effect of his cure upon so wide an area, leading to many conversions, confirms the status and influence of Æneas.

*b.* PETER AT JOPPA RAISES DORCAS. Verses 36-43

The second case is that of Dorcas. This is still more extreme, but the fame of Peter and the faith of the saints make her raising even from death only one more of those signs of divine sanction recorded by Dr. Luke. Joppa was doubtless Peter's objective from the first. It lay only ten miles northwest of Lydda on the seacoast. The data are full enough to warrant believing Joppa at that time the main center of Christian influence along the coast. Six witnesses go thence with Peter to Cæsarea and also to Jerusalem a little later. The mention of widows and works and workers of charity with Dorcas enlarges the background, as also does the sending of delegates to hasten his coming to Joppa. Dr. Ramsay well remarks that "the description of the scene when Peter arrived at the house strongly suggests the account of an eyewitness before whose memory the visible details stood out clearly." Since Peter put all out of the room, and appears to have had no close companion like John on this trip, we suggest that he is himself the source of the narrative. Hobart suggests that the circumstantial account coincides with Luke's custom in recording cures, etc., in terms of a medical practitioner. The similarity of this case with that of the raising of Jairus's daughter, where Peter was present, is often remarked; even the similarity of the names "Talitha" and "Tabitha" is made much of by some. As the craft of tanner was considered degrading among the Jews, and yet Peter makes his home at Joppa with the tanner, Simon, it has been thought that we get here another glimpse at the process in Peter's preparation for his change of mind toward things usually esteemed common or unclean. Dr. Lumby states it clearly thus: "In the mind of Saint Peter some prejudices of the Jews were already becoming of small account."



PETER RAISING DORCAS



## [TRANSLATION]

parts of the country he came down to visit the saints who lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Æneas, who for eight years had been bedridden with paralysis.

"Æneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ cures you! Rise up, and make your own bed."

He arose at once. And all the people dwelling at Lydda and in Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

*b.* PETER AT JOPPA RAISES DORCAS. Verses 36-43

Now, at Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, called in Greek Dorcas, meaning Gazelle. Her life was full of beautiful and compassionate deeds, which she was always doing. But just at that time she had fallen sick and died; and they had bathed her and laid her in an upper room. As Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him with the request to come to them without delay. So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived they took him up to her room, and all the widows stood by him weeping and showing him the tunics and outer garments which Dorcas used to make while she was still with them. But Peter, putting them all out of the room, and getting on his knees, began to pray, and turning toward the body, he said,

"Tabitha, rise up!"

She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand, raised her up, and calling the saints and widows he presented her alive to them. This became known through all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. Peter remained for some time at Joppa, with a tanner whose name was Simon.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND ITS EFFECTS

[COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. CORNELIUS'S VISION AT CÆSAREA. Verses 1-8.

Like Saul's vision experience, this one is made very prominent, being referred to four times, that is, here and in verses 22, 30, and xi, 13. The name "Cornelius" was truly Roman and common at that time, but there were other than nominal characteristics of a very noble mind. It has been noticed that the centurions mentioned in the New Testament are without exception deeply religious men. Even the centurion who acted as the executioner of Jesus was quick to respond to the appeal of his victim's personality and boldly confessed "truly this man was the Son of God." Cornelius was not a proselyte or Peter could not have been criticized for eating with him (xi, 4). Both his family and some of his retainers shared in his pious tendencies. As always, "prayers and alms" are the sure tokens of a devout soul. Though a commander of others, he is quick to acknowledge the authority of a superior. Like Saul, when faced by his bright-shining Lord, he too replies, "What wilt Thou?" The selection of three men as messengers shows his social status and his appreciation of that of Peter.

#### Paragraph 2. PETER'S VISION AT JOPPA. Verses 9-16.

This experience of Peter about noon of the day following was equally necessary, just as in the case of Ananias at Damascus. The same Divine Spirit works in preparation on both sides. The committee of invitation is nearing Joppa when Peter goes to the housetop to pray. Christ's three great visions and voices from heaven came to Him in moments of prayer. Peter is evidently in a peculiar state of mind. It is high noon and yet he goes to the top of the house. He is hungry and asks for food to be served

## CHAPTER X

### THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND ITS EFFECTS

[TRANSLATION]

#### **Paragraph 1. CORNELIUS'S VISION AT CÆSAREA.** Verses 1-8.

Now there was a man quartered in Cæsarea, a Captain of the Italian regiment, named Cornelius. He was a religious man, one who with all his household feared God, who used to do charitable deeds to the people and always prayed to God. One afternoon about three o'clock he had a vision and distinctly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him,

"Cornelius."

He gazed at the angel in much alarm, and said,

"What is it, Sir?"

"Your prayers," replied the angel, "and your deeds of charity have gone up for a memorial before God. Now, send men to Joppa for a certain Simon, who is surnamed Peter. He is stopping as guest of another Simon, a tanner, whose house is on the seashore."

When the angel who spoke to him had gone he called two of his household slaves and a God-fearing soldier, of those who were in constant attendance upon him, and when he had told them everything he sent them to Joppa.

#### **Paragraph 2. PETER'S VISION AT JOPPA. Verses 9-16.**

The next day while they were still on the road and were nearing the city, Peter went up about noon to pray on



## [COMMENTARY]

him alone and apart from his host. He is weary and perplexed and falls into a state of trance. The vision is best interpreted just as Peter takes it. It is a symbol showing the divine contempt, not of distinctions between animals, but between *men*, as Paul so constantly taught after attaining the same conviction. "God is no respecter of persons." What God is content to create and use in His service His ministers must in no wise despise. Three times this vivid picture passes before Peter and still the record asserts his deep perplexity.

This is the climax episode of Period B, that of transition from the Jewish to the Gentile focus of the great ellipse which formed the orbit of early Christianity. It is so similar to a like situation in the ministry of Jesus that we must press the comparison. He had formally and with real success, but not in any complete sense, presented His credentials and made His appeals to the teachers of the nation in Jerusalem. Officially He had been rejected, and Judæa and Jerusalem never repented. He then proceeded to Samaria and there sowed seed which promised and produced at least thirty fold. He next gave special opportunity to the people of Nazareth, where "He had been brought up," and was again rejected. Proceeding to Capernaum, the emporium of the province and real center of "Galilee of the nations," He cured the son of a nobleman, whose faith exceeded that of any in Israel, called from imperial customs one of his foremost apostles and gathered in the earnest of ultimate world conquest. Making Capernaum "His own city," He did most of His mighty works there and thence projected His influence and teaching unto the uttermost parts of the earth. He made one tour through the maritime regions in which lay the great cities Ptolemais, Tyre, Sarepta, and Sidon, at least one across the Lebanon, and as far north as Cæsarea Philippi and several into the Greek colonial cities known as the Decapoli (or Ten cities), although there were at that time at least a score of such towns on the eastern side of the Jordan. He found in all these extra Judæan communities just what Philip and Peter and John and Paul were to find, many elect souls among the Gentiles, only waiting for the word of invitation and welcome into the true kingdom of God. They rarely appeared to need persuasion. They were only too conscious of their lost estate. The Holy Spirit had already prepared their hearts as good ground for the reception of the Word. There was no timidity nor hesitation on their part once the evangel and the evangelist proved to be what the Spirit had already led

## [TRANSLATION]

the roof. He was getting very hungry and wished something to eat, but while they were preparing it a trance came over him. He saw the sky opening and a kind of receptacle descending, like a great sheet let down by its four corners to the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds, and a voice came to him,

"Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

But Peter said,

"By no means, Lord, for I have never yet eaten anything common or unclean."

Again a second time the voice spoke to him:

"What God has cleansed you must not regard as common."

This occurred three times, and the receptacle was at once lifted up into the sky.

**Paragraph 3. THE INVITATION SENT BY CORNELIUS.**  
Verses 17-23.

While Peter was greatly in doubt as to the meaning of the vision he had seen, just then the men sent by Cornelius had inquired for Simon's house and stood at the gate, calling out to inquire if Simon, surnamed Peter, was being entertained there. Peter, however, was still thinking about the vision when the Spirit said to him:

"Come, there are three men asking for you. Rouse yourself and go down, and do not hesitate, for it is I who have sent them."

So Peter went down to the men and said:

"I am the man you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?"

"Captain Cornelius," they said, "an upright and God-fearing man, and one well spoken of by the whole Jewish

## [COMMENTARY]

them to look for. The startling and heart-searching fact most frequently met with, not only in all the Scriptures but in all Christian history, is that the white and plentiful harvest always and everywhere awaits the consecrated and efficient harvester. The Acts of the Apostles is the true and permanent manual both as to theory and practice in the work of world evangelism.

**Paragraph 3. THE INVITATION SENT BY CORNELIUS.**  
Verses 17-23.

Now word is brought by the Spirit that he must immediately act on the principle laid down, that a committee awaits him below stairs, come to ask him to open the door of salvation to a Gentile centurion in the very center of the city and camp of the foreign enslavers of his own nation, at Cæsarea. When assured that the God who sent the vision had also sent the visitors Peter descends and welcomes his guests, and at once is told that the centurion is both a very religious man and one highly reputed among "the whole Jewish nation." The spokesman also tells of his master's heavenly vision and injunction to send for the Apostle. Peter can hesitate no longer. That the step is one of great moment is seen from Peter's care to take along with him six witnesses, the wisdom of which precaution is abundantly seen in the next chapter.

**Paragraph 4. THE INVITATION ACCEPTED BY PETER.**  
Verses 24-33.

Sufficient stress is not laid by the ordinary commentator upon the fine manners invariably displayed by the early Christians. There is a certain poise and quiet ease in circumstances where the normal functions of host and guest are exchanged that is only natural among the well bred, and there is an atmosphere of largeness and graciousness about the social situations involved, no matter how unexpected or extreme, that throws the actors in this most dramatic story into a most favorable light. Search the records from end to end, and it is not possible to find an instance where the manners of the early believers do not compare favorably with those of even the highest circles in which they move. The case of Peter in this chapter is by no means exceptional; here, as everywhere, the bearing of Christ's ambassadors leaves nothing to be desired in the way of true courtesy or culture. The boldness so often remarked

## [TRANSLATION]

nation, has been instructed by a holy angel to send and bring you to his house, and to listen to what you had to say."

Then he invited them in and entertained them.

**Paragraph 4. THE INVITATION ACCEPTED BY PETER.**

Verses 24-33.

The next day he arose and set out with them, some of the brothers from Joppa accompanying him, and on the day following they reached Cæsarea. Now, Cornelius was looking for them, and had assembled his relatives and intimate friends together. When Peter was entering the house Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him. Peter, however, lifted him up.

"Stand up," he said, "I myself also am only a man."

Then talking with him Peter went in, and found a large company assembled, and he said to them:

"You very well understand how unlawful it is for a Jew to be on intimate or even visiting terms with a foreigner, but God has shown me that I should call no man common or unclean. It is for this reason that I came without making any objection when I was sent for. I wish therefore to inquire why you sent for me?"

"Three days ago, at this very hour," replied Cornelius, "I was engaged in the afternoon prayers in my house when suddenly a man in shining raiment stood before me, and said:

" 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your deeds of charity are remembered before God. Send, therefore, to Joppa and bring hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he is guest in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea-shore.'"

## [COMMENTARY]

by those they come in contact with is not rudeness but a sort of self-command and high courage that does the disciples great credit. Adequacy of preparation and a certain air of leisurely deliberation in making new moves also speak for well-ordered social traditions. The entire scene so artistically drawn of the Apostle's visit to Cæsarea does no less credit to Peter than to his most courteous host, the Roman centurion, Cornelius.

**Paragraph 5. PETER'S SERMON AT CÆSAREA. Verses 34-43.**

In Peter's sermon we see another proof of the sense of propriety and power of adaptability which mark the truly cultured man. Though his message is in no respect different from that given to the Jews at Jerusalem, it is stated in a way that peculiarly fits his listeners. He does not assume that they are ignorant of what has been going on in the hill-country of Galilee and Judæa since the coming of the Baptist, and even to the shameful death of his Master by crucifixion. Quite the contrary; he presumes that it is all familiar to them, but so cleverly does he review it all that it gives just the background he desires for his testimony to the final resurrection and exaltation of the Christ and the duty enjoined upon him and his fellow disciples to proclaim redemption and remission of sins to all believing in His divinity and Saviourhood. To his Gentile audience Peter does not cite writer and passage where this is promised in the Old Testament, but says in general terms that all the Prophets foretold both the humiliation and ultimate triumph of the Messiah not only of the Jewish race but also of every-one; for, "I now clearly see," says Peter, "that God is no respecter of persons, but that he who reverences Him and does justly in *every* nation is acceptable to Him."

**Paragraph 6. THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS. Verses 44-48.**

No sooner had Peter covered this identical chain of events narrated in his Pentecostal sermon, than the same demonstration of divine favor was given the believing audience in the house of Cornelius. The Holy Spirit fell upon them and they began to speak with tongues and to magnify God. Here, just the reverse of the case on the day of Pentecost, it is the Christians who are astonished and the Gentiles who are filled with the Spirit. As in

## [TRANSLATION]

"I therefore sent for you at once, and you have been most kind in coming. So now we are all here assembled before God to hear everything you have been enjoined by the Lord to say."

**Paragraph 5. PETER'S SERMON AT CÆSAREA. Verses 34-43.**

Then Peter opening his mouth began to speak.

"I now clearly see," he said, "that God is no respecter of persons, but that he who reverences Him and does justly, in every nation, is acceptable to Him. The message which He sent to the Sons of Israel when He proclaimed the good news of peace through Jesus Christ (the one who is Lord of all) you surely know—at least you know how the report spread through the whole of Judæa, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power—how He went about doing good and curing every-one who was under the power of the devil, for God was with Him. And we are eyewitnesses of all that He did both in the country of Judæa and in Jerusalem, and yet they put Him to death, hanging Him on a cross. That same Jesus God raised up on the third day and allowed Him to be openly seen, not by all the people, but by witnesses—men previously selected by God—namely, by us, who ate and drank with Him after His resurrection from the dead. Moreover, He enjoined us to preach to the people and to bear emphatic testimony that this was He whom God has appointed to be Judge of the living and the dead. All the Prophets bear witness to Him, and testify that remission of sins is received through His name by every-one who believes in Him."

## [COMMENTARY]

the case of Cornelius himself so it is with his friends and neighbors—they are more ready to receive this extension of divine grace than either Peter or his companions are to give it. But this is as great a day for Peter as for Cornelius, and he is not found wanting. He directs, as elsewhere, that formal baptism shall be administered in the name of Jesus Christ. And now he consistently carries out the command of the angel at Joppa and enters into closer communion with his Gentile friends by remaining as their guest and eating with them for some days. Of course it is possible that he spent part of this time in the house of Philip, as Paul and Luke did afterward, since, as we have already surmised, Philip was no doubt party to all that had transpired.

## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 6. THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS. Verses 44-48.**

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit fell on all those who were listening to the Word. And the Jewish believers who had come with Peter were astonished that on the Gentiles also the free gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter asked,

“Can any-one refuse water, or object to these people being baptized—men who have received the Holy Spirit just as we ourselves did?”

And he directed that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain with them for some days.



## CHAPTER XI

### APOSTOLIC SANCTION OF PETER'S COURSE

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. THE CASE REPORTED AT JERUSALEM.

##### Verses 1-4.

Luke appears not to have given undue emphasis to this episode. It was of so important a nature that reports of it were carried not only to Jerusalem but to every congregation of native Jews throughout Judæa. The persecution from without which had so greatly scattered the new faith now finds its counterpart within the Christian brotherhood and threatens even greater disaster to peace and progress. By the time Peter returns to the capital much criticism of his course is openly expressed, and from a standpoint which we in recent days can appreciate, since the incident in Southeast Africa relative to the sharing of the Holy Eucharist between different types of believers has stirred up the whole Christian world. Despite all the advances of two thousand years this sort of bigotry bids fair to engage some minds till the end of time. Though Paul himself was cured of it as by a miracle, yet he had to suffer its dogged persistence, on every field of operations where real Hebrews were encountered, to the last ditch. Peter, with one slight defection, was probably rid of it as fully as Paul, and in his wide range of conquest as indicated by his letters and by early tradition he had to battle with it everywhere in the Eastern Diaspora. The parallel features between Paul's experience at Damascus and that of Peter at Joppa and Cæsarea are marked. The vivid and repeated visions from the sky, the extreme form of prejudice involved, and the clear expressions of divine sanction on the part of the Holy Spirit when the advances have been made, cannot be without real significance. The essential democracy of the early church is also observed again, for Peter as well as Paul is held accountable to the general assembly of the mother church.

#### Paragraph 2. PETER'S MASTERLY DEFENSE. Verses 5-17.

Here, as in the narrative of the previous chapter, we find that Peter emphasizes the fact that he was praying when his vision came. He also makes clear again his own Pharisaic pride in his claim that nothing had hitherto entered his mouth contrary to the

## CHAPTER XI

### APOSTOLIC SANCTION OF PETER'S COURSE

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE CASE REPORTED AT JERUSALEM.**  
Verses 1-4.

Now, the Apostles and the brothers throughout Judæa heard that the Gentiles also had received the Word of God. When, therefore, Peter returned to Jerusalem the partisans of circumcision kept finding fault with him.

"You visited people who were not circumcised," they said, "and you ate with them!"

Then Peter began and explained the situation to them from first to last.

**Paragraph 2. PETER'S MASTERLY DEFENSE. Verses 5-17.**

"I was in the city of Joppa praying," he said, "and while in a trance I saw a vision—a kind of receptacle coming, like a great sheet let down from the sky by the four corners. It came right down to me, and when I looked steadily at it I began to see various kinds of animals—wild beasts, reptiles, and birds. Moreover, I also heard a voice saying to me,

" 'Rise, Peter, kill and eat.' "

" 'By no means, Lord,' I replied, 'for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But the voice answered the second time from the sky :

" 'What God has cleansed do not regard as common.' "

"This occurred three times, when everything was

## [COMMENTARY]

strictest Hebraic ritual, that the pantomime debate was three times repeated, and that the Holy Spirit specifically commanded him to go to Caesarea without further parley. Now comes to the front the peculiar value of his six witnesses from Joppa, who not only as fellow witnesses shared with him the experience, but gladly assumed their part in the responsibility. More than this, Peter disclaims any honor for having persuaded the centurion's household to believe, for he says, as we have seen, that it was just the other way; Cornelius was already convinced, and it was Peter and his party who needed the last steps to conviction, for "he had only just begun to speak when the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He fell upon us" at Pentecost. Peter adroitly heightens the effect by saying that, as he stood spectator to the scene, the oft-repeated promise of Jesus came to his mind, that the baptism of John should be at length in the case of His followers succeeded by that of the Holy Spirit. It therefore followed that, if the Gentiles had the spiritual baptism, they must be acceptable disciples of the same Lord, its only source. Thus the conclusion was inevitable, and Peter wisely refrains from pressing or stressing it, leaving his hearers to answer the question for themselves—"If God has determined to share His highest favors with those of the uncircumcision, who can withstand or say Him nay?"

**Paragraph 3. FULL INDORSEMENT BY THE CHURCH.**  
Verse 18.

Peter and his six witnesses from Joppa have won the case. Every possible objection has been met, and the opposition joins in the general verdict, "No cause for action," and outbursts of praise and jubilation mark the end of the inquiry. But there seems to have been some formal record of the general position attained. Luke's sense of historical balance leads him to insert this minute here, as an offset to the similar opinion reached in Paul's similar trial and triumph later, to show the consistency and continuity of official opinion from this time forward. By referring to our general outline of the book it may be seen that this event falls just at the crown of the hill between the Jewish and Gentile periods.

**Paragraph 4. THE RISE AT ANTIOCH OF THE GENTILE CHURCH. Verses 19-21.**

There are no doubt good reasons why neither Samaria, Damascus,

## [TRANSLATION]

drawn up again into the sky. Now, at that moment three men came to the house where we were, sent from Cæsarea after me. And the Spirit told me to go with them without any hesitation at all. Moreover, these six brothers accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. He then described to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying:

“‘Send to Joppa and bring hither Simon, surnamed Peter. He will tell you how you and your entire household may be saved.’

“Now, I had only just begun to speak,” said Peter, “when the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He fell upon us at the beginning, and I remembered the words of the Lord, how He used to say,

“‘John baptized with water; you, however, shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

“So, then, if God gave to them exactly the same free gift that he did to us when we first believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should be able to frustrate God?”

**Paragraph 3. FULL INDORSEMENT OF THE CHURCH.**

Verse 18.

On hearing this they ceased to object, and glorified God and said,

“So, then, God has actually granted to the Gentiles the repentance which leads unto life.”

**Paragraph 4. THE RISE AT ANTIOCH OF THE GENTILE CHURCH. Verses 19-21.**

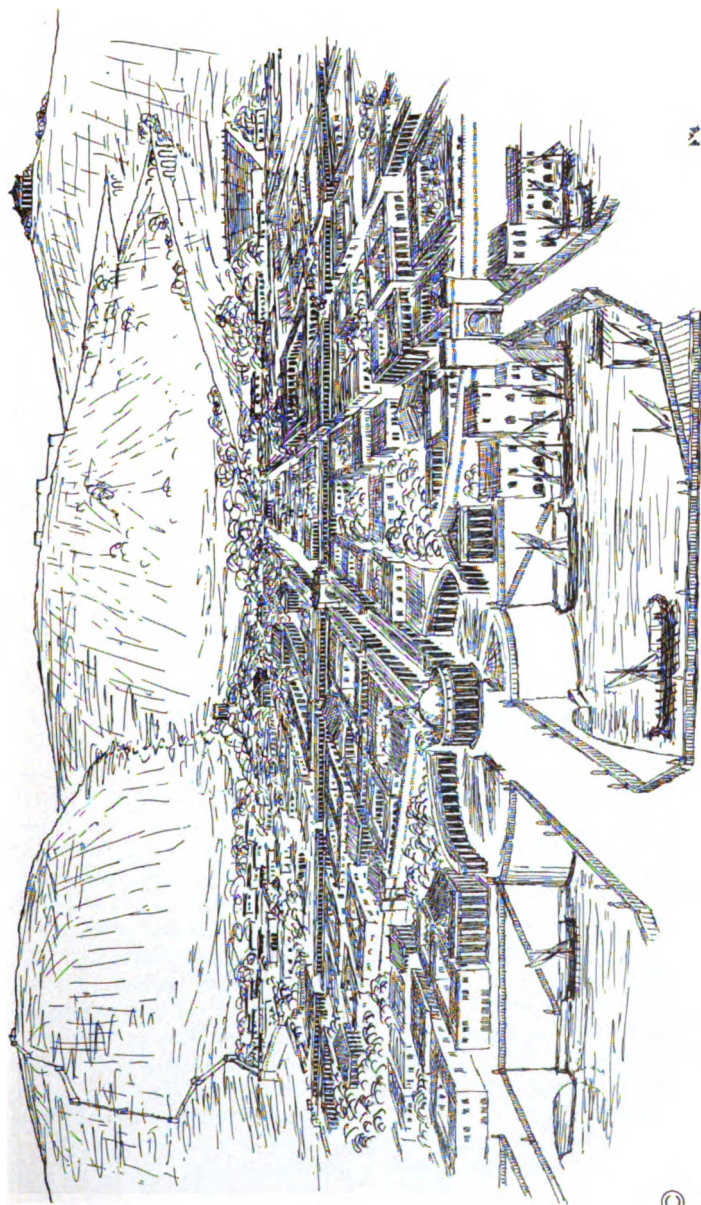
Now those who had been driven in different directions by the persecution that arose over Stephen made their way

## [COMMENTARY]

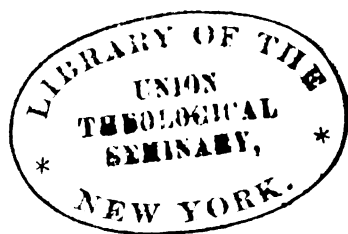
Joppa, nor Cæsarea was destined to become the proper starting point for the new outreach of Christian conquest. Suffice it to say, that they were in no case such typical centers of Gentile life, nor were they, like Antioch, situated at the gateway of Asia Minor, which must be the next territory traversed in reaching Rome, the imperial capital. At the same time Antioch, like no other city in the empire, was the direct doorway into Babylonia, Persia, and India, which must also have the benefit of the universal Christ. Again, Antioch was the metropolis of Syria, and so the next natural center for operations in extending the strategic lines of the new faith. It could have but one rival in any event, and that was Alexandria, a somewhat larger city, and one most favorably furnished for receiving the preachers of the New Covenant, since it was the home of probably the largest colony of Jews in the empire, one that had given the then "Authorized Version" to the world in the Greek Septuagint. That Alexandria was visited by apostolic Evangelists almost as soon as Antioch and with equally large and abiding results is not to be doubted, but Luke does not choose to divide the interest of his readers among various high places and personages. Though the new drive outward from the home base, started by Saul's persecution following his lynching of Stephen, had already reached Antioch, it had kept the good news for the ears of Jews only. But now that the Jerusalem church has officially sanctioned still wider evangelization, some Greek-speaking believers, natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, arrive at the Syrian capital and openly preach to the Greeks themselves. Divine approval is at once manifest, and great success marks the new departure.

**Paragraph 5. RELATIONS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN  
ANTIOCH AND JERUSALEM. Verses 22-30.**

As always in this book, advanced steps must be referred for approval to the home council at Jerusalem. This being done, Barnabas is chosen to visit Antioch, and he discovers such manifest tokens of heavenly sanction already given that he enters heartily into the situation and encourages the work to the highest degree. It soon surpasses the possible capacity of direction even thus available, and he recalls the fact that his friend Saul, of Tarsus, is just the person needed to fill out the complement of preachers and teachers. It is several years—some think nearly ten—since Saul



ANTIOCH ON THE ORONTES—RECONSTRUCTED. MOUNT SILPIUS WITH TEMPLE  
OF JUPITER ON RIGHT



## [TRANSLATION]

as far as Phœnicia and Cyprus and Antioch, but they preached the Word to none but Jews. Some of them, however, were Cyprians and Cyrenæans, who when they arrived at Antioch began to speak also to the Greeks, and told them the gospel of the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, so that a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

**Paragraph 5. RELATIONS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN  
ANTIOCH AND JERUSALEM. Verses 22-30.**

When the report about these reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem they sent out Barnabas to Antioch.

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## [COMMENTARY]

had been sent off by urgent and solicitous friends, among them Barnabas, from the quay at Casarea. What had engaged his eager mind during the interval can only be conjectured, but it is not difficult to believe that he was largely employed, carefully rereading the entire Old Testament in the light of his experience at Damascus and knowledge of the events preceding and following the death of his newly found Saviour. We cannot accept the theory that he had been actively proclaiming the new faith throughout Cyprus, but it is hard to believe that he had kept his talent unused in Tarsus. Now, however, his hour is fully come. He is sought out and brought to Antioch by great-hearted Barnabas, and for a whole year is his true yokefellow there, teaching and preaching the gospel with great success, and undisturbed, it would seem, for the only time in his career, from jealous antagonism. The fact that the disciples of the new faith are here for the first time called Christians, as Luke says, may indicate as well that Paul had so given his talents to the exaltation of the Anointed One that it marked a new epoch in the character of apostolic teaching. It may be truly significant that "Christ" is the favorite title for the Saviour in Paul's writings, occurring in the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians more times than in all of the other books of the New Testament.



## [COMMENTARY]

The episode of Agabus's prophecy is an instance of the kind still vouchsafed by the Spirit in the first period at least of the life of the church, as proved by other New Testament references. In Chapter xxi, 10ff. a prophet of the same name—not a common one nor elsewhere used in Scripture—comes from Jerusalem, the same city, to Cæsarea and performs a like act of predictive and striking prophecy, and it is in like way fulfilled to the letter in due time. The famines of the emperor Claudius's reign (A. D. 41-54) recurred nearly every other year during that entire period, and are abundantly referred to by Josephus, Eusebius, Dio Cassius, Suetonius, and Tacitus. From Josephus (*Antiquities*, XX, ii, 5) we suppose the severest and most widespread of these, occurring in A. D. 45, to be that coinciding with this prophecy. This was also the time when the famous queen of Adiabene, Helena, was residing at Jerusalem, and it is told of her that she also rendered much assistance to the stricken Hebrew people there. As Antioch was a very wealthy city, and, from its vast commercial interests, quite independent of crop conditions for a single season, this provision for the relief of the Judæan believers in straitened conditions was not only immensely magnanimous but quite possible on the part of the church in the Syrian capital. No doubt Barnabas was at the bottom of the project, and he took care to have Saul appointed fellow committeeman, so that he might again introduce him to the elders of the mother church under most favorable circumstances.

## [TRANSLATION]

When he arrived and had seen the favor which God had bestowed he was glad and kept encouraging them all to remain faithful to the Lord with heartfelt purpose, for he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith; and a great throng was added to the Lord. Then he went off to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch, and thus it happened that for a whole year they were associated together in the church there and taught a great multitude. And it was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. During those very days certain prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, and one of them named Agabus came forward and foretold by the Spirit that a great famine was coming throughout the whole world—it took place in the reign of Claudius. Therefore the disciples determined to send relief, each in proportion to his means, for the brothers who were living in Judæa. This they did, sending on their contribution to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

## CHAPTER XII

### FIERCE PERSECUTION OF THE TWELVE AT JERUSALEM

[COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. MARTYRDOM OF JAMES AND ATTEMPT ON PETER. Verses 1-5.

A new government that knows not Joseph has now come into control. The rule of a Roman proconsul is mild at any time beside that of a Herod, and Agrippa I was true to the worst Idumæan side of the house. He was grandson of Herod the Great, brought up in Rome, and on the accession of Caligula to the purple (A. D. 37) was given rule over the provinces previously held by Philip and Lysanias (Luke iii, 1). When Claudius became emperor (A. D. 41) he gave Herod rule over all the west of Palestine, making his kingdom even greater in extent than that of his grandfather. Of course it is clear that Agrippa would not have made James his first target had not that Apostle, whom we know from the Gospels to have been among the foremost of the Twelve, been very prominent in the work of preaching at Jerusalem. Now, as we have hitherto heard nothing of this in the book of Acts, we get an indirect light on the state of things, and are no doubt warranted in supposing that the Ten behind Peter and James were all busily active as also the five Deacons were behind Philip and Stephen. It will be remembered that James was the older of the two sons of Zebedee, whose mother Salome, Jesus's aunt, asked if they might share the Master's sovereign rule in close fellowship when He came to the crown. Jesus in reply asked if they felt able to assume the needful responsibilities and risks involved, to drink the cup of death which He should drink. They answered,

"We are able!"

Taking them at their word, He said,

"Ye shall indeed drink My cup."

And now the first of the martyr Apostles is James, and at the close of his generation, we have reason to believe, John was the last.

## CHAPTER XII

### FIERCE PERSECUTION OF THE TWELVE AT JERUSALEM

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. MARTYRDOM OF JAMES AND ATTEMPT ON  
PETER. Verses 1-5.**

About that time King Herod laid violent hands on certain members of the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that this pleased the Jews he proceeded to apprehend Peter also. This was during the days of unleavened bread. When he had arrested him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four sets of guards of four soldiers each for safety, intending to bring him out again to the people after the Passover. So then Peter was under guard in prison; meanwhile the church kept praying earnestly to God for him.

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[COMMENTARY]

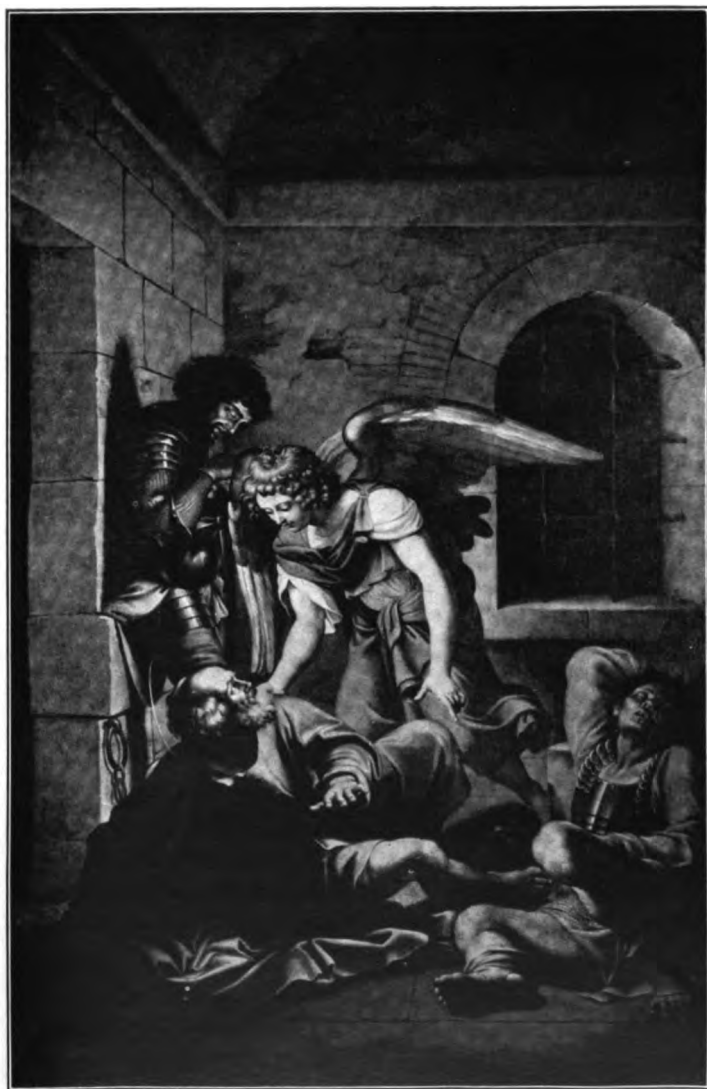
It is well to remember that the outbursts of persecuting hatred and violence are in direct proportion to the success of the movement against which they are hurled. For more than a decade now every method that the unscrupulous Sadducees and Sanhedrin and elements of the baser sort could invent has failed to stem the tide of advancing Christianity, and although the Twelve have been exempt from direct assault it is felt that more extreme steps must now be taken, and that possibly if some of the Apostles are murdered the rest will flee the city and the desired peace be secured. It is still clear that this extreme policy could not be safely launched under the name of religion, and so the delight in welcoming Herod

## [COMMENTARY]

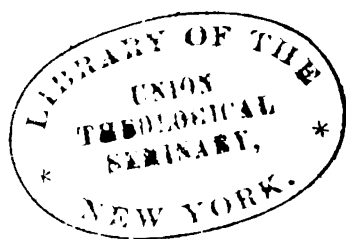
to their camp was openly expressed by his sycophant churchmen. Of the four ways in vogue among the Jews for public execution—stoning, burning, strangling, and beheading—it has been thought that the last possibly indicates here Herod's special assumption of responsibility, since death by the sword was the most royal. The method also of Peter's arrest, and the elaborate assignment of royal guards for his safe-keeping in the royal dungeon, point the same way. The Captain of the Temple well knew how likely Peter was to slip past ordinary turnkeys and must have felt relief at sight of sixteen legionaries quartered in the outer prison court. Possibly he suggested that two of these grenadiers be daily and nightly chained to their dangerous charge.

**Paragraph 2. PETER'S RESCUE FROM PRISON. Verses 6-17.**

For a fortnight Peter has enjoyed the close attentions of his Roman keepers, Passover is done, and the strangers from the provinces have largely gone. Owing to the recent death of James and the present imprisonment of Peter, probably no public preaching was going on during the festival, and the Sadducees and many partisans of Herod among the Pharisees were looking forward to another martyrdom with pious complacency. But prayer is being practiced without ceasing all this time. Ever since the days of Christ in the flesh the home of Mark's mother has been a center of special comfort and refuge to the inner group of Jerusalem believers. Though Peter's work in the Hebrew capital is all but finished, and our book is soon to leave him out of any further particular primacy, still his work in the Master's plan is only just well started and a long and prosperous course yet awaits him largely throughout the lands and cities of the Dispersion even unto Babylon, but at length he must be advanced to the martyr's crown in Imperial Rome. Like all true prayer, this of the united church is heard. Again God's angel appears in the foreground, and Luke, who knows how to tell of angel visitations better than almost any other biblical writer, gives full rein to his facile pen. That Luke was reputed to have been an artist we can easily understand. He was truly a word-painter and a portrait painter. Of course Peter was the ultimate source of this tale, though it is difficult to think that Luke did not get some details direct from the lips of the happy slave woman, Rhoda. His few, clean strokes leave nothing to be added.



PETER RELEASED FROM PRISON



## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 2. PETER'S RESCUE FROM PRISON. Verses 6-17.**

The very night before Herod was going to bring him to trial Peter lay sleeping between two soldiers, chained with two chains, and guards before the door guarded the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood beside him, and a light shone in the cell; and striking Peter on the side he roused him and said,

"Get up quickly."

With that the chains fell from his hands. And the angel said,

"Fasten your girdle and put on your sandals."

This he did. Then the angel said,

"Throw your cloak about you and follow me."

He went out and began to follow him, yet Peter could not realize that what the angel did was true, but he kept thinking that he saw a vision. So when they had passed the first guard and then the second they came to the iron gate which leads into the city. This opened to them of its own accord, and passing out they went along one street, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter, coming to himself, said,

"Now I surely know that the Lord has sent His angel and freed me from the hand of Herod and from everything the Jewish people expected."

Thus reflecting on the situation, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, surnamed Mark, where a great many were gathered together for prayer. When he had knocked at the door of the porch a slave girl named Rhoda came to answer it; but when she recognized Peter's voice, from very joy she did not open the door but ran



## [COMMENTARY]

The many faithful friends of Peter must have realized that a few hours would determine his fate, for they continue all night in prayer. Proof that the house must have been large and the dwelling of a person well to do is seen in its capacity to entertain many and in the employment of the special caretaker of the door, Rhoda. The latter's sure conviction that she knew Peter's voice shows that he had been a frequent visitor, her joy, that she was a Christian convert. The incredulity of the company as to her announcement of Peter's release does not impugn their faith but shows merely their surprise that his rescue should have come in so miraculous a form. Their remark about "his angel" would seem to indicate that some feared that he was already executed and his spirit had begun to wander free from the flesh. When Peter at last was admitted his chief concern was lest James, the Lord's brother, and the Apostles fail to know of his actual escape. Since it was inexpedient to remain and incur still further penalties, he doubtless took refreshment and withdrew to Bethany or Emmaus before morning.

**Paragraph 3. THE DEATH OF THE ROYAL GUARD AND PERSECUTOR. Verses 18-23.**

The chagrin next morning of the officers and men in charge of Peter's prison is not difficult to imagine. In contrast with their ill-concealed wrath and blustering officiousness, as they scoured the city and roughly questioned every possible clue, the self-effacement and preoccupation of the Christians was painful. When the king, anticipating a day of special pleasure in accomplishing for his ecclesiastics what they had hardly dared ask, is at last informed of the Apostle's escape, his anger knows no bounds. Though the Greek does not clearly say in legal terms that he executed the guilty guards, the common opinion that he did is borne out both by the language and by the reputation of that ruthless monarch. No Herod in all the line had more nearly lived up to the worst standards set by Herod the Great than Agrippa I. As though to cover his disappointment in Jerusalem, he goes immediately down to his palace in Cæsarea. There he plunges into another type of controversy. It appears from secular history that Herod Agrippa was ambitious to play the role of dictator as to the maritime policy of all the Phœnician coast. He had especially favored the rise and development of Berytus (the modern Beyrout) and had embel-

## [TRANSLATION]

in and announced that Peter was standing outside the door.

"You are crazy," they said.

But she kept asserting that it was he. Then they said, "It is his angel."

Peter, however, kept on knocking, and when they had opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. He beckoned with his hand to them to be quiet, and explained to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.

"Tell James and the brothers about it," he said.

Then he left them and went to another place.

**Paragraph 3. THE DEATH OF THE ROYAL GUARD AND PERSECUTOR. Verses 18-23.**

The next morning there was a great stir among the soldiers as to what could have become of Peter. When

## [COMMENTARY]

lished it in true Herodian style with many great buildings. The inevitable rivalries between the older and newer centers of trade broke out, and Agrippa knew well how to make his imperial partiality weigh heavily upon such great ports even as Sidon and Tyre. Their boards of trade were not novices at handling such difficulties, and by the judicious use of gold, and of flattery, in this instance fully as effective, they gained their end. They bribed Blastus, the king's chamberlain, and secured a reopening of the case, ostensibly wishing to understand more fully the royal mind. Their large commission, coming hat in hand to pay Agrippa a visit, impressed and flattered him. Taking occasion of the Emperor's birthday or some great Imperial festival or like event, in which he always joined most enthusiastically, Herod outdid himself in efforts duly to impress the delegation. The excesses in which he indulged, the rising heat of early summer, the already impaired state of his physical system, and finally the overstrain involved in his oratorical efforts, conjoined totally to unhinge his judgment, and when the

## [COMMENTARY]

sophisticated populace in the theater broke out to acclaim him as worthy of divine honors, like the Emperor himself, with no rebuke nor denial from the royal box, the cup of his proud blasphemy overflowed, and even Jehovah could endure no more. He sent His angel to end with one stroke of his avenging sword such scenes forever.

**Paragraph 4. BARNABAS, SAUL, AND MARK GO TO ANTIOCH. Verses 24, 25.**

Despite the efforts of Herod Agrippa I to embarrass the progress of the faith, their effect in sum total, like that of other persecutions, was to confirm those already won over and to extend the area of believers all the more widely and rapidly. Meanwhile the season of famine has come and gone and the commission sent with gifts from Antioch to help the Christians at Jerusalem has finished its work. Now we are ready to turn the page and leave the mother church to work out its destiny on the lines already traced. It has passed unscathed through the purifying fires of repeated persecutions, and will endure until the end of the age, revered by the daughter congregations rapidly multiplying in the provinces, and strong in its influence and position in the Holy City until its downfall in A. D. 66-70. For reasons that must have been weighty Barnabas persuades his young kinsman Mark to accompany him and Saul back to Antioch. That he was well to do and therefore no expense to the cause, that he was well educated and a graphic writer, that he had a mind of his own and yet was truly devoted to the point of extreme self-sacrifice to the propagation of the faith, and that he embodied in his own person the best traditions of the Jerusalem community of Christians, all of which we know from his later career and writings, made Mark a distinct acquisition to the bureau of able men who gave themselves in the first generation to the dissemination of the gospel in foreign parts.

## [TRANSLATION]

Herod had him searched for and could not find him, he sharply questioned the guards and ordered them off to be executed. Then he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea and stayed there.

Now Herod was very much incensed against the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they waited on him in large numbers, and won over Blastus, the king's chamberlain, and begged for peace, because their country depended on the king's for its food supply. So on a set day Herod put on his royal robes, took his place on the judgment seat, and proceeded to make them a speech. The populace kept calling out,

"The voice of a god, and not of a man!"

And all at once an angel of the Lord smote him because he had not given the glory to God, and, being eaten up by worms, he expired.

**Paragraph 4. BARNABAS, SAUL, AND MARK GO TO ANTIOCH. Verses 24, 25.**

The Word of the Lord, however, kept increasing and spreading abroad. Meanwhile Barnabas and Saul, having accomplished their mission, returned from Jerusalem, bringing with them John, surnamed Mark.













**C. THE GENTILE PERIOD—  
CHAPTERS XIII-XXVIII**

**ADVANCE FROM THE CAPITAL OF THE  
PROVINCE TO THAT OF THE EMPIRE**

**A. D. 44 to A. D. 62**

## CHAPTER XIII

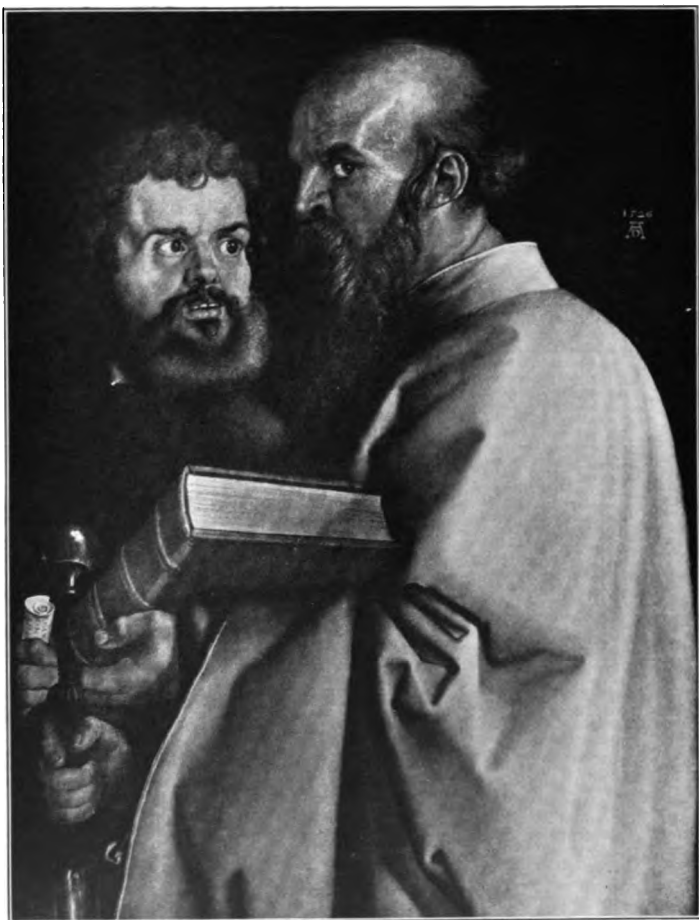
### ANTIOCH THE NEW CENTER OF EVANGELISM

[COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. A STRONG GROUP OF LEADERS. Verses 1-4.

We now leave the twelve Apostles and their distinctive field of operations. New wine demands new bottles; new conquests, new captains. By action of the Apostles themselves, as we have already seen, Barnabas was delegated from the very first to correlate the new movement at Antioch with that in Jerusalem. Though a property holder of Cyprus, he had been foremost in laying his possessions at the feet of the Apostles for the common good. He had led in raising funds at Antioch for the good of the home church; therefore he must have been a man of substance. That he was a man who commanded the confidence of every section of the community is seen in his handling of Paul's interests, time and again, both in and out of Jerusalem. Not the least compliment to his power is his evident dominance over the man from Tarsus, until the latter had become thoroughly oriented to his life mission. Barnabas stands at the top and Saul at the bottom of the list of leaders here named. The others were new names, and so referred to more fully. Both Jewish and Gentile names are given of the first, of the second only the Latin name and the fact of his African nativity. In the case of the third we have another of those interesting links uncovered whereby ancient society was linked together. It will be remembered that Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, was during all of Jesus's lifetime ruler of Galilee, and that his court at Tiberias on Lake Galilee was affected by the Messianic movement, his own chamberlain Chuza, and Johanna his wife, being its open supporters. Now we find that a foster brother of this same Herod was also brought into the circle of the same influence, and here at Antioch holds a high position in this earliest Gentile Christian center. That the church at Antioch was truly cosmopolitan is attested by the names in this brief list. That its spirit of Christianity and zeal also reached out to the uttermost parts is seen from





PAUL AND MARK

## CHAPTER XIII

### ANTIOCH THE NEW CENTER OF EVANGELISM

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. A STRONG GROUP OF LEADERS. Verses 1-4.**

Now, there were at Antioch among the members of the local church some prophets and teachers—Barnabas, Symeon, surnamed Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenæan, besides Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,

“Set apart for me now Barnabas and Saul unto the work to which I have called them.”

So they fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon them, and sent them off. They then being thus sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed thence to Cyprus.

**Paragraph 2. THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR—BARNABAS AND SAUL IN CYPRUS. Verses 5-12.**

Having arrived at Salamis, they began to declare the Word of God in the Jewish synagogues. Moreover, they also had John as assistant. They went through the whole island as far as Paphos, where they came across a Jewish magician and false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was a friend of Sergius Paulus, the Proconsul, a man of high intelligence, who called into his presence Barnabas and Saul, and asked to hear the Word of God. But Elymas,

## [COMMENTARY]

the formal and unanimous manner in which it heard the command of the Spirit and boldly set apart and sent abroad two of its most gifted prophets and teachers. The Holy Spirit, both in the call of Barnabas and Saul and in their solemn ordination, warrants Luke in calling them Apostles from this time on and in classing them as not beneath that dignity in the fields to which they minister.

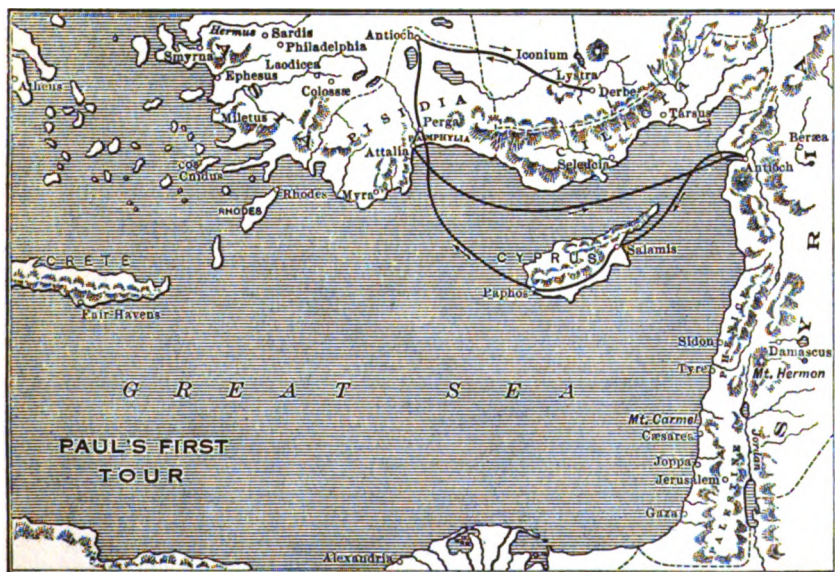
**Paragraph 2. THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR—BARNABAS AND SAUL IN CYPRUS. Verses 5-12.**

Luke rightly repeats at the start the fact that this enterprise was directly inspired from on high, and thus holds our attention true to his purpose in the book as a whole, namely, the carrying out of the Saviour's plan to evangelize the entire world. Barnabas and Saul go down the Orontes River to its mouth, about sixteen miles, and at Seleucia take the most natural step in their projected tour by sailing to the first foreign port, the city of Salamis, on the island of Cyprus, less than a hundred miles away. There is no immediate change in method. They confine activities to the Jewish synagogues and for weeks pursue an even and thorough course, going from town to town until they at last reach Paphos, the capital, at the extreme western end. Here the incident of importance takes place, and Luke gives it full attention. Possibly Paul was his informant. In any case this battle with the magician marked a moment of importance in his experience only second to that on the Damascus road. As at Samaria, the power of the black art had to be faced and overcome, so thus early in this new course the issue was drawn on much the same grounds. Bar-Jesus has succeeded in interesting the Proconsul by his clever tricks and pseudo-philosophic talk until he supposes his monopoly is secured. Three strange and very gentlemanly teachers come to town, and anon by sheer earnestness, sincerity, and intellectual power become the subjects of all inquiry and conversation. The Proconsul invites them to speak at his official residence, and shows by his inquiries real inclination to favor the new form of faith. The magician, who is a renegade Jew and possibly a Levite and can quote the Hebrew prophets with glibness, repeatedly breaks in upon Barnabas, denying the accuracy of his statements and telling Sergius Paulus that his guests are trying to deceive him for their own gain under cover of preaching a new religion. Finally Saul can endure no more. He has not given a lifetime to the study of the Scriptures in the combined light of the

## [TRANSLATION]

the magician, for that is the meaning of his name, opposed them, trying to dissuade the Proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked with fixed gaze upon him and said:

“You incarnation of all craftiness and deceit! Son of



the devil! Enemy of all righteousness! Will you never cease perverting the straight paths of the Lord? Look you, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind and unable to see the light for a while.”

And with that there fell upon him a dark mist, and he went groping about for some one to lead him by the hand. So when the Proconsul saw what had happened he be-



## [COMMENTARY]

Hebrew and Christian faith to stand speechless in the face of such transparent fraud. Inspired by the Holy One, he sees that Bar-Jesus is in even worse state than he himself had been before his conversion, and that to strike him with temporary blindness would be not only wholesome but possibly in the end curative. His terrible words of wrath and judgment are none too severe. Elymas quails like a self-confessed demon before him, and Saul, "who is also called Paul," captures his Roman namesake—a thing impossible under the circumstances, unless as a man of high intelligence he were wholly convinced of the hollowness of the magician's claims as well as of the verity of the new religion. It must be noted that the interest and astonishment of the Proconsul is not said to rest in any way upon the demonstration against Elymas, but both before and after the incident to center upon "the teaching of the Lord."

**Paragraph 3. THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR—PAUL  
AND BARNABAS IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA. Verses  
13-41.**

**a. INTRODUCTION TO PAUL'S FIRST GOSPEL SERMON  
Verses 13-16**

From Paphos, Paul and those with him—note the change in leadership—sail across to Perga on the seacoast of Pamphylia. We accept the view that the plan of their tour had originally been to follow the sea journey westward along the coast, Ephesus being quite likely their ultimate aim. This was abandoned for some unexplained reason, and that is probably excuse for Mark's return to Jerusalem. Had their objective been Galatia from the first, the approach would more naturally have been by way of the overland roads and through the Syrian and Cilician passes northwest of Antioch. Dr. Ramsay's contention that Paul had a sudden and very severe illness at Perga, one for which a higher and dryer climate was needful, explains many things—among them the failure to preach in Pamphylia at this time, the condition of illness and weakness in which Paul reached Galatia, and also perhaps Mark's defection. In case Luke was a member of this first party of foreign missionaries, as not a few scholars have come to believe, there are again some points which go well with the general situation. First, we have an easy solution for the vivid and full reports of Paul's speeches throughout the tour. Then the departure

## [TRANSLATION]

lieved, being struck with astonishment at the teaching of the Lord.

**Paragraph 3. THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR—PAUL AND BARNABAS IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA. Verses 13-41.**

**a. INTRODUCTION TO PAUL'S FIRST GOSPEL SERMON  
Verses 13-16**

Then Paul and those with him sailed from Paphos unto Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and went back to Jerusalem. But the others journeyed on from Perga and arrived at Pisidian Antioch, where they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and sat down. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets those in charge of the synagogue sent word to them,

“Brother men, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, speak.”

Then Paul stood up and, raising his hand for silence, said:

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[COMMENTARY]

of Mark from Perga at so critical a moment is not difficult, supposing Paul to be ill and in need of medical treatment and change of climate. The presence of Dr. Luke and his prescription and charge of the case, of course, bring thus immense relief to us as readers, as they must have brought to Barnabas. Finally the total lack of mention of Luke's name in the account is rather favorable than otherwise to the theory, since he only names Mark after they get to Cyprus, though he started with them from Antioch. Moreover, it assumes the validity of the ancient tradition of both Eusebius and Jerome that Luke was from Antioch. It also cares for the case of the “we” that slips into the text at Chapter xiv, 22, indicating, like all the other “we” passages, the presence of Luke with the Apostolic company on this journey. Not even the most narrow

## [COMMENTARY]

literalist will claim that Luke leaves invariable evidence of his presence wherever and whenever he might do so.

By forced marches they reach Pisidian Antioch and are very cordially and considerably received. They enter very quietly into the local synagogue one Sabbath, and after the regular readings, at the point in the service where the discourse or sermon took place, are invited to address the assembly. The report of Paul's first gospel sermon follows. It includes pious men not Hebrews, though chiefly shaped upon Jewish premises and history—indeed, it has been suggested that Paul's discourse was intended to serve as sermon to the texts of the day, Deut. i, from the Pentateuch, and Isa. i, from the Prophets. It falls into three sections.

### b. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Verses 17-25

Paul begins with the Hebrews in Egypt, where the lesson from the law naturally suggested his point of departure, and with graphic but brief outline sketches the divine leadership of the chosen people, despite the drawbacks of perpetual misunderstandings both on the part of the race as a whole and of its consecrated leaders, until the time of David. In David Jehovah found the type of the Son of Man, one who would do *all* His will. With a masterly stroke Paul refers to Jehovah's explicit promise to David, that of his seed should surely come the nation's Redeemer, as fulfilled in Jesus, whom John the Baptist clearly pointed out as such, though multitudes at the time were ready to accept John himself as the Messiah. But he, quoting Isaiah, claimed only to be Messiah's forerunner, preparing His way and unworthy even to act as His sandal-bearer. This brings Paul's hearers directly to the center of his discourse.

### c. THE PRESENT PERIOD THE FULFILLMENT OF ALL THE PAST. Verses 26-37

In his earnestness Paul sweeps his glance over his most attentive audience, and leaning forward again makes his acknowledgment of their two points of view, as sons of Abraham and as pious men not of that stock. But he includes them all, and thus appeals equally to each as he cries:

"Brothers, do you realize that to us in this day—here and now—the good news comes of the fulfillment of this high promise? To be sure, the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem and most of the people at

## [TRANSLATION]

"Men of Israel, and you who live in the fear of God, hear me."

**b. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Verses 17-25**

"The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and advanced them while they dwelt in Egypt, and with an outstretched arm brought them out from it, and for about forty years He bore with them like a nursing father in the desert. Then after He had destroyed seven nations in Canaan He allotted their land to them for about four hundred fifty years, and thereafter He kept giving them judges down to the time of Samuel the prophet. And then they implored for a king, and God gave them for forty years Saul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. After displacing him He raised up David to be their king, and to him He bore witness and said,

"'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, who will do everything I desire.'

"It is from the offspring of this man that God brought to Israel according to His promise a Saviour in Jesus, before whose coming John had preached to all the people of Israel a baptism of repentance. Now, as John was nearing the end of his career he used to say:

"'What do you think me to be? I am not the Christ! But He comes after me, and I am not worthy to unloose the sandals of His feet!'"

**c. THE PRESENT PERIOD THE FULFILLMENT OF ALL THE PAST. Verses 26-37**

"Brother men, sons of Abraham's race, and those among you living in the fear of God, the message of this salvation has been sent to us. For those dwelling at

## [COMMENTARY]

large did not recognize their Messiah, for they only read a part of the prophecies concerning Him and themselves, and in ignorance fulfilled that part which foretold His ignominious death as an atonement for the race. Thus, I say, they unwittingly fulfilled by causing His death His immediate and final enthronement, for it is as spiritual and universal King that He is antitype of David. It is a notorious and actual fact that they drove the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate to crucify Him. He actually died as a public malefactor and was buried in a new-made tomb. But God raised Him from the dead! Of this fact there is ample and indisputable proof. For several weeks He appeared under every possible circumstance to His friends—to more than five hundred in a single gathering—and then He ascended into Heaven. Now, His rising from the dead before real dissolution had set in is one of the oft-repeated prophecies of David himself, and God hath set His own seal on Jesus as the one designated in those prophecies by raising Him again from death. All this occurred only a few years ago, and most of those who had the sublime privilege of seeing Him again alive are witnessing as we do here to this wondrous truth.

*d.* THE PERORATION AND APPEAL. Verses 38-41

"Brothers, the meaning of all these things is far deeper than appears upon the surface. The fact of sin is the most appalling and degrading fact in human history. It has weighed on the consciences of Jew and Gentile alike with the same oppressive power. To the Jew was given a system of laws, ordinances, and sacrifices as a preparatory step to God's sacrifice of His own Son as a full propitiation and atonement for sin. The keeping of the laws of Moses, even if possible, assured no soul of a sense of true justification or even of forgiveness in the sight of a Holy God. These things were only palliative, temporary, preparatory, and prophetic. Now comes the supreme spiritual satisfaction in the death and rising again of the Christ, who fulfills every prophecy, furnishes full and free forgiveness, gives to the believer the assurance of final justification, and uplifts the mind and soul with an experience of permanent and unquenchable joy."

Paragraph 4. TWOFOLD EFFECT OF PAUL'S ADDRESS.  
Verses 42-52.

The immediate effect of Paul's impassioned sermon seemed alto-

## [TRANSLATION]

Jerusalem and their rulers failed to recognize Him, and in condemning Him they have fulfilled the very language of the Prophets, which are read every Sabbath. Moreover, they besought Pilate to have Him put to death, although they found no ground for the death penalty. So, having carried out every detail written about Him, they took Him down from the cross and placed Him in a tomb. God, however, raised Him from the dead. And for many days He appeared to those who had gone up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and these are now His witnesses to the people. Thus we are now bringing the glad news that the promise made to our fathers God has completely fulfilled to us their children by His raising up Jesus; just as it is written in the second Psalm:

“‘THOU ART MY SON. TO-DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE’ (Psa. ii, 7).

“Moreover, as proof that He raised Him from the dead, never again to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

“‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY AND ASSURED PROMISES OF DAVID’ (Isa. lv, 3).

and, going further, He says in another Psalm:

“‘THOU WILT NOT GIVE UP THY HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION’ (Psa. xvi, 10).

“Now, David himself having served God’s will in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid away beside his fathers, and suffered corruption. But He whom God raised up did not suffer corruption.”

*d.* THE PERORATION AND APPEAL. Verses 38-41

“Now then, my brother men, you must clearly under-

## [COMMENTARY]

gether favorable. The audience as a whole wished to hear further of his teaching and asked if the Apostles might not be present and speak the following Sabbath. Mutual understanding to that effect between them and the officials evidently took place, since the crowds gathered for that end seven days later. Moreover, numbers of both Jews and proselytes at once accepted the new doctrine, since Paul and Barnabas kept urging them to continue and persevere in the divine favor. But the powers of bigotry and of darkness were by no means asleep, nor did orthodox Hebrews propose that, unchallenged, this specious heresy should sweep away their stand upon the true Mosaic law and Levitical customs as they had been handed down and understood for over a thousand years. We must not think that Paul and Barnabas were not intensely active meanwhile, nor that they were unprepared for the developments that came. At length the Sabbath arrives and with it throngs of people; "almost the whole city" assembles at the Jewish synagogue, not out of idle curiosity but from the best motives—"to hear the Word of God." Paul is again the chief speaker, and doubtless pursues the same line of reasoning and appeal already taken. But certain of the leading Jews take issue with his use of the Old Testament in supporting his contentions, and finding him more than a match for them in this direction proceed to heap personal abuse and contempt upon him. Both he and Barnabas soon see the impossibility of further peace, and boldly accepting the gage, turn the tables with great diplomacy. Can we not imagine them earnestly conferring together for a moment, and then tall, quiet-mannered Barnabas in a clear deliberate tone, not high pitched, give their ultimatum?—

"We are Jews of some standing and reputation both in our own native communities and in Jerusalem, where we have lived for many years. We were both deeply prejudiced against this teaching until overwhelmed by the evidence of its truth, and having once embraced it we experienced all the satisfaction and joy which it claimed. We have devoted our lives to proclaiming it as widely as lies in our power. Through an unexpected providence we reached your city and were warmly welcomed in your synagogue. We have sincerely presented to you, as was our duty, the first opportunity to accept this which we believe to be the true interpretation of the Word of God, the very word of eternal life. Since you, our brethren and countrymen according to the flesh, reject it, we now turn to the Gentiles, for our commission, as you have rightly judged, includes them; as Isaiah himself says, speaking of Messiah,

## [TRANSLATION]

stand that it is through this Man that forgiveness of sins is openly declared to you, and that every believer in Him is absolved from everything he could not be absolved from under Moses's law. See to it then lest what is said in the prophets should come upon you:

“‘BEHOLD, YOU DESPISERS, BE ASTONISHED AND PERISH,  
FOR I AM DOING A DEED IN YOUR DAYS,  
A DEED WHICH YOU WILL NEVER BELIEVE,  
THOUGH ONE FULLY EXPLAIN IT TO YOU’ ”

(Hab. i, 5).

**Paragraph 4. TWOFOLD EFFECT OF PAUL'S ADDRESS.**  
**Verses 42-52.**

Now, as they went out the people kept beseeching Paul and Barnabas to tell them about these same things the next Sabbath. And after the assembly broke up, members of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who continued talking to them and urging them to persevere in the grace of God.

On the following Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the Word of God. The Jews, however, seeing the crowds, were filled with jealousy, and kept contradicting what Paul was saying and heaping abuse on him.

Thereupon both Paul and Barnabas spoke out fearlessly and said:

“We were bound to declare the Word of God to you first, but as you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, why, we now turn to the Gentiles. For the Lord thus commands us:



## [COMMENTARY]

"I HAVE SET YOU FOR A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES . . . A MEANS OF SALVATION UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.'"

The outcome was, of course, twofold. First, the acceptance of the gospel by multitudes of the Gentiles, not only residents of the city but throughout the immediate region. Second, the rousing of all the forces of opposition, both racial and social, against the Apostles, and finally their expulsion, though their dignity was not violated in the order of their going. Dr. Ramsay makes able argument for holding that they spent the winter in Antioch, for time would be needed to evangelize the contiguous territory; the Jews could not compel their withdrawal without prolonged process of pseudo legal nature and Paul would be disposed to stand his ground until expediency dictated otherwise.

Thus fully has Luke recorded another of those strategic developments in the progress of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. The "Door of the Gentiles" is at last flung wide open, and there are many adversaries. Dr. Hort truly says, "This incident in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch is the true turning point at which a Gentile Christianity formally and definitely begins, and so a Judaistic Christianity becomes possible."

## [TRANSLATION]

“‘I HAVE SET YOU FOR A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES. YOU ARE TO BE THE MEANS OF SALVATION UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH’” (Isa. xlix, 6).

When the Gentiles heard this they began to rejoice and glorified the Word of God, and as many as were appointed to life eternal believed. Thus the Word of the Lord was being carried throughout the whole country. The Jews, however, raised the devout women of rank who worshiped with them, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their territory. They, however, having shaken off the dust of their feet against them, went to Iconium. As for the disciples, they abounded in joy and in the Holy Spirit.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

[COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 1. PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ICONIUM.**  
Verses 1-7.

Advancing to the next prominent city southeastward, about seventy-five miles off, the Apostles, according to Luke, proceed in the same manner with precisely the same results. They are not frightened away at once, moreover, nor until a solid basis for a permanent church is laid, continuing probably for two or three months. Here we see again, as at Antioch, how well invested Paul's years have been in preparing so thoroughly for his great course as pioneer missionary, how constantly his native relation to the Græco-Roman world, and especially his Roman citizenship, stood him in great stead, how priceless was the value of his deep biblical learning, and how unspeakable was the worth of his personal experience in conversion and in realizing in his own mind and soul the overpowering and encouraging possession of the Holy Spirit. The comradeship of such a true brother of consolation and tower of strength as he possessed in Barnabas was also no small factor in the successes of this first missionary tour. One other feature in their equipment was furnished these early leaders that proved on special occasions of particular value, and it must neither be overlooked nor minimized. The power of performing miracles is frequently referred to and exercised, though never for selfish ends, and always in the selfsame manner as it was employed by their Master and Lord. After duly exercising all these talents and gifts to a successful degree, an ugly plot for their assassination being disclosed, they flee to the neighbor province, Lycaonia. Assassination is the last argument of desperation; when no other answer can be given, personal abuse, a blow on the mouth, strangulation, drowning, burning, stoning, crucifixion—these have been the resort of even the most enlightened and proud intellectuals. Surely, such souls at such times must be demon-possessed.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ICONIUM.**  
Verses 1-7.

In the same way it happened at Iconium. The Apostles went into the synagogue and so preached that a great throng believed both of Jews and Greeks. But the Jews who had not believed stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. Therefore Paul and Barnabas remained quite a period, speaking boldly, in dependence on the Lord, while He kept attesting the word of His grace, giving signs and wonders to be performed by their hands. However, the people of the city divided into parties, some going with the Jews and some with the Apostles. But when there broke out a hostile movement both of the Gentiles and Jews together with their rulers to abuse and stone them, the Apostles learned of it and fled to the Lycaonian cities Lystra and Derbe and the country round about, and continued preaching the gospel there.

**Paragraph 2. PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA.** Verses 8-20.

Now, there used to sit in the streets of Lystra a man powerless in his feet, one who had never walked, being lame from his very birth. This man had heard Paul speaking for some time, and Paul, fixing his gaze upon

## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 2. PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA. Verses 8-20.**

Although the miracle wrought by Paul at Lystra was very striking and one of the few like incidents recorded in the book, it is evidently subordinate in the mind of Luke to the far more striking episode which it serves to introduce. The impotent man, like the case at the Beautiful Gate in chapter iii, was one well known, and his complete cure called universal attention to his benefactors. His extreme helplessness as his neighbors knew him in contrast to his new agility and freedom of movement could not be explained without the intervention of divine aid, and as no part of Paul's speech had apparently dwelt on the source of his healing gift, the unsophisticated populace attributed it wholly to Paul and Barnabas, whom they took to be gods in human form. The man was clearly one peculiarly ready to sense the spiritual quality of the apostolic teachings, probably from some knowledge that he had gained of the Scriptures in his years of quietude, and showed his appreciation and attitude of mind in his glowing face, so that Paul did the healing as only incidental to what he had in hand and out of an impulse of pity, altogether apart from any expectation either on his own part or that of its object. The depth and spontaneity as well of the popular tribute, is reflected in the use of the local patois, though, of course, the throng understood Paul, who was using Greek, and generally spoke it themselves. Because of their use of the local jargon and the fact that they were engaging the priests of the Temple which stood outside the city gates to assist in their enterprise, the plan of the citizens to pay them divine honors had advanced to the danger point before the Apostles got wind of it. All the more extreme was the demonstration they made of their humanity in rending their garments and loudly proclaiming that fact. But Paul again rises to the unusual demands of the hour and delivers another unique and very significant address. Hitherto his auditors had always been either Jews or Gentiles of Jewish tendencies, and at least partial assimilation, but at Lystra the audience is purely pagan. We therefore find no quotations from the Old Testament nor references to Hebrew history. He takes a lofty and universal conception of humanity as a whole and its relation to the God of creation, and of nature, declaring that it is unworthy to attempt to appease or worship Him in ways which only carnal man might devise. These all imply, in the interests of a

## [TRANSLATION]

him and seeing that he had faith to be cured, said in a loud voice,

"Stand up straight upon your feet!"

With that he sprang up and began to walk. The crowds, however, seeing what Paul had done, cried out in the Lycaonian language,

"The gods in human form have come down to us!"

Barnabas they began to call Zeus, and Paul, since he took the lead in speaking, Hermes. Moreover, the priest of Zeus, whose temple stood at the entrance of their city,

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## [COMMENTARY]

degrading system, the inaccessibility of God and His essential cruelty, or at least His indifference, to man without material gifts and tokens of groveling servility on his part. On the contrary, the living and only God is full of mercy and of sympathy, and seeks the companionship of His creature, and has given this message of good news to be proclaimed everywhere as they had been hearing it, when, as one of the proofs of its truth, the cripple who never had before walked, was by God's power and grace completely restored. Paul's eloquence and largeness of thought rouses his hearers anew, and since they know not how to express their enthusiasm at his message in any better way, again they make move toward offering their sacrifices in honor of these strange visitors. Their placing Barnabas before Paul is incidental proof of the veracity of the record in several respects. But Satan has not abdicated his throne, and even as the second climax arises the inevitable opposition lifts its voice as out of the very ground. A cavalcade of Jews, well mounted and very imposing in personnel, ride into the market place and with great clamor assert that these men are their countrymen, though unworthy to be recognized as such, having set out to destroy the religion in which they were born, and that they are unsafe to harbor in any community and ought to be put to death. The frenzy of fanaticism seizes the crowd and bursts forth in uncontrollable rage. The reaction is no more sudden than complete. One victim at least must be sacrificed, and they fall upon the smaller man. That the Jews keep control of the situation is

## [COMMENTARY]

seen in the form of execution—that by stoning right there in the center of the city. The Jews of Iconium show their utter contempt of these rustic provincials by thus profaning their city. Horrified and conscience-stricken, however, at the success of their act, they drag the body outside the gate, supposing Paul dead, and depart at once whither they had come. But Paul is not to meet the fate of Stephen. He must suffer yet many like experiences and others still more severe because of the ineffable name of his Master and King. We can see what effect such an event might have on the young Timothy, if he were standing among the sympathetic friends of Paul when Barnabas turned to them and said “He is alive!” and when they saw Paul struggle to his feet and leaning on Barnabas go slowly back to the city. Quite probably the Apostles spent that night at the house of Timothy’s mother, for from that time forth the son of Eunice and grandmother Lois was the devoted disciple of Paul.

**Paragraph 3. PAUL AND BARNABAS AT DERBE, AND  
THEIR RETURN TO ANTIOCH. Verses 21-28.**

As Derbe is the frontier city of the province on the great imperial thoroughfare to Cilicia, Paul and Barnabas traveled to it, and there without further apparent hindrance continued long enough to firmly plant a church, which stood as an important link in the chain of Galatian churches that Paul later visited again and again, and to which he writes one of his greater Epistles. It would have been easy and very natural for the Apostles to continue their journey across the mountains of Cilicia and through the famous pass above Tarsus, and so around the Gulf of Issus to Syria, but they evidently thought that it were far better slowly to retrace their course westward and confirm and, if possible, strengthen the work so laboriously begun. Thus early in his great evangelistic career Paul shows that spirit of unquenchable determination to leave undone nothing which might strongly establish those who had accepted his gospel teaching. At Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch they stop in turn, boldly appearing again in the very centers where, but a few months earlier, their presence had set those communities upside down. Of course this visit proved of great advantage to the young and apparently flourishing churches. Presbyters to have responsibility and oversight were appointed, and thus the work was solidified, and prayer and fasting as at other important moments in the early church play a

## [TRANSLATION]

brought bulls and garlands to the gates with the crowds and wanted to offer sacrifices. But when the Apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it they rent their garments and ran out among the crowd exclaiming:

"O men, why are you doing all this? We are only human, of like passions with you, and the gospel we are preaching to you is to turn from such vain things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. Now, in bygone times He permitted all the nations to go their own ways, and yet He did not fail to give you witness about Himself, by His beneficence sending you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and filling you with food and gladness to your heart's content."

Even with words like these they could hardly restrain the crowds from sacrificing to them.

But a party of Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium, and when they had won over the crowds they stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, supposing him to be dead. He, however, when the disciples gathered round him, got up and went back into the city, and the day following he went off with Barnabas to Derbe.

**Paragraph 3. PAUL AND BARNABAS AT DERBE, AND THEIR RETURN TO ANTIOCH. Verses 21-28.**

When they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made a large number of disciples, they went back again to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, encouraging the minds of the disciples, urging them to hold fast to the faith, and showing them that "we can make our way into the Kingdom of God only through many an affliction." So when they had caused elders to be chosen by vote in



## [COMMENTARY]

prominent part. They finally recross the mountains to the sea-coast and at Perga gather another congregation of believers where they had not been able to stop on their way inland. Not wishing to cross to Cyprus but to take a regular merchantman direct to the Syrian capital, they go some sixteen miles west of Perga to the more important port of Attaleia and evidently arrive just in time to embark without further evangelistic activities. Returning late in the summer to Antioch after a full year's absence, they make their report to the Church which had sent them forth. The chief note in the news brought back was that great and outstanding conviction which had developed through their Galatian experience—that God had indeed opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. The natural effect of all this was to mightily strengthen and solidify the Church in the Syrian Capital so that it was ready for the plague of Pharisaic bigotry which was soon to visit it.

## [TRANSLATION]

every church, after prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord in whom they had already come to believe. Then they passed through Pisidia to Pamphylia, and after speaking the Word in Perga they came down to Attaleia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had before been commended to the grace of God for the task they had now completed. Upon their arrival they gathered the church together and reported everything that God had done working with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. There they remained for some time with the disciples.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FIRST GREAT DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSY

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. ITS RISE IN ANTIOCH. Verses 1-5.**

No sooner does the Spirit of God inspire and thrust forth chosen men to take advanced steps in carrying out the great commission of the Lord than timid and conservative souls challenge and oppose the process. It was so in the case of Peter and his work at Cæsarea, and now the wider breach which seems already made at Antioch threatens still greater danger. Busybodies are sure to take this occasion to sow dissension, especially as they feel that the old enmity against Saul of Tarsus is carried over even in the sincerest circle of believers to Paul of Antioch. And so it happened. These narrow and restless souls took it upon them to go down, doubtless on their own initiative, to see if they could not remedy matters. Of course they only fanned the flame the more, and it soon became clear that the issue would never be settled until a general council had passed upon it at Jerusalem. A delegation was chosen at Antioch, of which Paul and Barnabas were members, and sent to lay the situation before the mother church. That the church of Antioch accompanied them for the first stage of the journey shows their unanimous sentiment in the matter. It would seem that the committee went overland along the Phœnician coast road, stopping from time to time, and enjoying the hospitality and sympathy of the semi-Gentile churches on the journey. At Jerusalem, they found unexpected welcome and took courage to tell anew all that had happened in northern Syria, Cyprus, and Asia Minor. It seems that not a few Pharisees had accepted the faith in Jerusalem, and to these the accounts of Paul and Barnabas left much to be desired. They led a considerable party in opposition to the newer views and threatened to disturb the deep state of peace which had begun to develop.

#### **Paragraph 2. ITS TRANSFER TO JERUSALEM. Verses 6-12.**

Finally, an assembly of the entire Jerusalem church was called and the case was traversed with care by all sides. Paul and Barnabas had private conference with the Apostles and leaders and



PETER AND PAUL AT ANTIOCH



## CHAPTER XV

### THE FIRST GREAT DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSY

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. ITS RISE IN ANTIOCH. Verses 1-5.**

Meanwhile certain persons came down from Judæa, and kept teaching the brothers, saying,

“If you are not circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

So there sprang up a serious dispute and not a little controversy between them and Paul and Barnabas, until it was arranged that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of their number should go up to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles and elders about this question. Thus they set out, accompanied for a way by the church, and as they passed through Phœnicia and Samaria they kept telling all the brothers, to their great joy, that the Gentiles were turning to God. On their arrival at Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church, the Apostles, and the elders, and they reported how that God had been with them, and all He had done. Some of the believers, however, who had belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and enjoined to keep the law of Moses.”

**Paragraph 2. ITS TRANSFER TO JERUSALEM. Verses 6-12.**

Then the Apostles and elders held a meeting to see about this matter, and after there had been a long investigation Peter arose and addressed them.

“Brother men,” he said, “you very well know that from

## [COMMENTARY]

seemed to make out their case there without difficulty. After the larger gathering had discussed the matter for some time, at length Peter rose and made a speech, favoring the liberal view and citing his experience at Cæsarea. He was sure that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles could not really be questioned nor denied, and that thus the divine seal was already set on this movement and further opposition should be looked upon as a contest with God. Salvation is free to all alike, and human ordinances are like a yoke of bondage marking inferiority outwardly, where no such thing inwardly exists. Peter's testimony quieted the gathering and prepared the way for Paul and Barnabas, both of whom gave full testimony bearing out the newer practice, dwelling specially on the manifestation of heaven's pleasure in miracles and signs of the most convincing sort. It is most interesting to note that neither Peter nor Paul is given undue prominence on this occasion, but that James, the brother of Jesus, dealt out righteous judgment, acting as judge between the chief and favorite leaders of each side.

**Paragraph 3. JAMES RENDERS THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL. Verses 13-21.**

Free and full discussion was encouraged; the precedent of Peter's like action at Cæsarea is adroitly laid as a governing principle and the prophecy of Amos is shown to find fulfillment in just such action, the main point being the real turning to God in penitence and faith of contrite men, whoever and wherever they may be. Under this strong putting of the merits of the case, the opposition appears to have signally weakened, if not to have openly yielded, and James offers a plan which could not fail to strike them as magnanimous and all that they had any right to ask. It will be seen that the decision frees the Gentiles from the outward limitations and restraints of the Mosaic law, while strongly insisting upon their observance of its inward or moral claims, with fourfold and most explicit injunctions against every form of impurity in public and private life. The injunctions against using meats connected with idolatrous rites and those containing blood were reasonable concessions to the Jewish party and made possible easy social communion between them and the Gentiles, which was in that day of paramount importance. This last is stated in the concluding paragraph in broad terms and with a form of suave impressiveness calculated to soothe his Hebrew hearers, and in words so like those

## [TRANSLATION]

the earliest days God chose from among you all that I should be the one from whose lips the Gentiles should hear the Word of the gospel and believe. Moreover, the God who knows all hearts attested this fact by giving to them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, without discriminating in the slightest degree between us and them when He cleansed their hearts by faith. Now then, why are you tempting God by putting a yoke on the necks of the disciples which neither your fathers nor we were able to bear? On the other hand, we believe that we shall be saved just as they are, through the grace of the Lord Jesus."

Then the entire assembly was quiet and listened to Barnabas and Paul while they recounted all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.

**Paragraph 3. JAMES RENDERS THE DECISION OF THE COUNCIL. Verses 13-21.**

After they had finished speaking James said:

"Brother men, listen to me. Symeon has told just how God first visited the Gentiles to take from among them a people to bear His name. Moreover, this agrees with the words of the Prophets, just as it is written:

"AFTER THIS I WILL RETURN AND I WILL BUILD UP  
AGAIN THE TENT OF DAVID

WHICH HAS FALLEN DOWN.

ITS VERY RUINS I WILL REBUILD AND SET IT UP ANEW  
SO THAT THE REST OF MEN MAY SEEK AFTER THE  
LORD

EVEN ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY  
NAME,



## [COMMENTARY]

of their Scripture writers as to seem quoted from them. No slight compliment is implied in the reference to the widespread dispersion and influence of the nation "in every city" of the empire.

**Paragraph 4. THE OFFICIAL DEPUTATION AND MESSAGE  
TO ANTIOCH. Verses 22-29.**

Altogether, the outcome of this most important conference is one of the happiest proofs of the guidance and control of the earliest church leaders by the Holy Spirit that the book affords. The unanimity with which the plan proposed by James, which was in no sense coercive, is freely adopted by "the whole church" and their acceptance as well of his formulation of it, which is repeated in the official minutes as quoted by Luke, shows that the Lord's brother rightly read the mind of the Spirit as moving upon that first Œcumenical Council. Again we come upon evidence of the fine sense of courteous atmosphere in which all the social amenities are observed without strain or emphasis withal in the election of formal delegates from the Jerusalem Church, "chief men among the brotherhood," to accompany the Antiochian commission on their return journey, and present personally the official findings to the daughter church. In Judas, called Bar-Sabbas, and Silas, we have two new names out of the inexhaustible background of men of leisure whom we find devoted to the new faith whenever the curtain is accidentally drawn aside. Silas in particular we shall have much more to do with, as he, like John Mark, appears in the sequel to be a staunch supporter and friend both of Paul and of Peter. It may be worth while to recall that the alternate candidate to Matthias, Judas Iscariot's successor, elected in chapter i, was a certain Joseph Bar-Sabbas, a close companion of Jesus during His ministry, and that Judas Bar-Sabbas here was quite probably his brother. As we find Mark at Antioch in the next chapter, it would seem that Barnabas persuaded him also to join him with Paul, Silas, and Judas on their return journey. Turning to the document which Luke has preserved for us, we find still further proof of the high conceptions common to early church utterance and intercourse. The beautifully expressed compliment to Barnabas and Paul as "our beloved . . . men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," together with the delicacy and restraint of the phrasing throughout this brief document, places it, all in all, on a par with, if not above, any similar note in classical or later

## [TRANSLATION]

SAITH THE LORD WHO HATH BEEN MAKING THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM OF OLD' (Amos ix, 11, 12).

"Hence, I am of the opinion that we ought not further to trouble those who are returning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we ought to write them to abstain from whatever is polluted by idols, from fornication, from the flesh of animals strangled, and from tasting blood. For Moses has had for generations those preaching him in every city, and he is being continually read aloud in the synagogues every Sabbath."

**Paragraph 4. THE OFFICIAL DEPUTATION AND MESSAGE TO ANTIOCH. Verses 22-29.**

Then the Apostles and elders, with the assent of the whole church, decided to select men of their own number and to send them with Paul and Barnabas unto Antioch. So they chose Judas, who was called Bar-Sabbas, and Silas, leading members of the brotherhood; and they wrote and sent this letter by them:

"The Apostles and the Elder Brothers

"To the Brothers of the Gentiles throughout Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Greeting.

"Since we have heard that some from among us have troubled you by their teaching, continually unsettling your minds without any such instructions from us, we have one and all decided to choose certain of our number and send them to you in company with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, and they are bringing you the very same message by word of mouth. For it seemed good unto us together with the Holy Spirit to lay no heavier load upon you

## [COMMENTARY]

literature. The inclusion of Cilicia in the salutation lends color to the view that prior to his call to Antioch Paul had evangelized that province. This is confirmed by the fact that he and Silas visit "the churches of Cilicia" on their journey to Galatia.

**Paragraph 5. RETURN AND REPORT OF THE DELEGATES.**  
Verses 30-35.

It is difficult fully to appreciate the deep relief which came to the churches of northern Syria and Asia Minor through the settlement of this vexing question. Not only did the Apostles read the Epistle that had been sent, but presented the Jerusalem delegates, who proved to be able preachers of the Word and who did much to strengthen the provincial congregations. Finally, their mission being ended, Judas at least returns to his home. It would seem that Silas felt free to continue at Antioch, and an old reading, still reflected in the Authorized Version, says so, though it is not of the highest authenticity. For a while Paul and Barnabas, with other leaders whose names are not given, worked in the Syrian capital and the neighborhood until it appeared as though they might well be spared again and had better revisit the congregations already established outside of Syria, among other reasons, doubtless, in order to deliver in person the decree which the mother church had placed in their hands and with which they might hope to win over some most desirable converts who were standing out on the very grounds it was intended to remove. The issue as between the bondage of Pharisaic Judaism and the complete emancipation which pure Christianity brought was sure to rise in every community where there were Jews, and the inevitable battle must be prepared for and joined with undaunted courage and without any thought of compromise. Paul saw this clearly from the moment of his own conversion as no other early leader did or perhaps could do, and his years of intense thought and reading of the Scriptures in Arabia and Cilicia since that time had deepened his conviction and now he sets forth with a resolve to yield nothing to the arch enemy as he conceived him of his only Sovereign and King.

**Paragraph 6. THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR—DIVISION OF FORCES AND FIELDS.** Verses 36-41.

The proposal for this second foreign tour comes from Paul, and Barnabas, possibly not so keen as to the need of pushing the battle

## [TRANSLATION]

than these needful things: you must abstain from food offered to idols, from tasting blood, from animals strangled, and from fornication. By keeping yourselves clear of these things you will do well. Farewell."

**Paragraph 5. RETURN AND REPORT OF THE DELEGATES.**  
Verses 30-35.

When, therefore, these had been sent on their journey they came down to Antioch, where they called together the entire company and gave them the letter. When they had read it they rejoiced at the comfort it gave them. Both Judas and Silas also, being prophets, with many addresses encouraged and helped strengthen the brothers. After they had spent some time there the brothers sent them back with a blessing of peace to those who had commissioned them (verse 34, not in the Greek). Paul, however, and Barnabas remained at Antioch, teaching and with many others preaching the Word of the Lord.

**Paragraph 6. THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR—DIVISION OF FORCES AND FIELDS.** Verses 36-41.

After some time Paul said to Barnabas,

"Let us go again and visit the brothers in every city where we have proclaimed the Word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."

But while Barnabas wanted to take along John, called Mark, with them, Paul did not think that one should accompany them now who had left them in Pamphylia instead of standing by them when it came to real work. So sharp a controversy arose that they separated, Barnabas taking Mark with him and sailing for Cyprus, while

## [COMMENTARY]

for complete spiritual freedom among the Jews of the Dispersion, suggests that they take along Mark and have him as before for companion. In Galatians, chapter ii, verse 13, we find that Barnabas either before or after the Jerusalem Council "dissembled" on the question of circumcision, and, like Peter, was inclined to be somewhat double-faced; therefore we can understand his apparent lack of enthusiasm, and his suggestion as to Mark may be only a polite way of showing it. This, if true, only stirred Paul the more, and as he had in mind a more strenuous campaign even than that from which Mark had withdrawn in Pamphylia, he took the proposal of Barnabas as sufficient ground for making up a different party altogether. Instead of Barnabas, he very fortunately was able to persuade Silas to join him on this journey, which was destined to be in some respects the most important adventure of his very adventurous career. Silas also enjoyed the advantage of being a Roman citizen, many think, and that gave him favor with Paul and fitted him for this tour in particular. In case Dr. Luke was also of the party, Paul had a strong force with which to undertake his memorable campaign of the next two years. Barnabas and Mark sail away to Cyprus, and Luke does not again refer to them. Evidently, the church at Antioch has now come to esteem Paul as the greater leader, since it bids him formal farewell, and commends

## [TRANSLATION]

Paul chose Silas, set forth, commended to the grace of God by the brothers, and passed through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches.

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## [COMMENTARY]

him and Silas to a gracious Providence as they take their departure. Ramsay says "The expression of the passage seems designed to show that the Antiochian church sympathized rather with Paul, who was continuing the forward movement, than with Barnabas, who went away into the backwater of Cyprus and passes out of history. . . . The fate of the church lay in the work of Paul and his coadjutors. We part from the honorable and great personality of Barnabas with deep regret; but history marches with Paul." As Barnabas had already sailed for Cyprus, Paul and his company choose the overland route, going from point to point in Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. This passage and the inclusion of the churches here mentioned in the decree of the Council in verse 23 is the only reference we have to them in the book. Thus, again almost unconsciously, Luke has drawn aside the veil, disclosing a wide area of activity totally aside from his chosen field of history.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. FORMER FIELDS REVISITED. Verses 1-5.**

Having delivered the Jerusalem decree to the churches named in it, Paul crossed the frontier of the wild, uncivilized country lying between the provinces of Cilicia and Galatia, about one hundred and twenty miles, and came to Derbe, which had been the most eastward city visited in his former tour. Nothing of note occurring, they go on soon to Lystra and there find Timothy, already called of the Holy Spirit and widely known and respected for his gifts and graces as an Evangelist. Paul greatly desired this young man to join his group of workers, and since he was only half Jew, his father being a Greek, and had never been circumcised, Paul felt that he would be more useful to the cause, especially where Jewish prejudices were still dominant, if the rite were performed upon him. This he did, and thereby made favorable impression upon all who took note of his own scrupulous care not to offend the weakest believer while promulgating the injunctions of freedom sent forth by the Jerusalem church. Paul's refusal to allow the circumcision of Titus at Jerusalem when it was demanded in the interests of bigotry shows how courageous as well as charitable he could be on occasion, and how even-handed was his sense of justice. The general results of Paul's second visit to the churches of Province Galatia were very gratifying, and he left after a few weeks, taking Timothy with him for a great campaign which he but dimly felt was awaiting him still further westward. He was now well started on the great highway across Asia Minor, and the lure of Greece and imperial Rome had seized him. Fortunately, neither Barnabas nor Mark could hinder his making the great adventure.

#### **Paragraph 2. THE FURTHER JOURNEY ACROSS ASIA MINOR. Verses 6-10.**

They soon entered the most important Greek Province in the Roman empire, and doubtless Paul felt that Asia, and particularly

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. FORMER FIELDS REVISITED. Verses 1-5.**

He also came to Derbe and to Lystra. At the latter place there was a disciple named Timotheus, son of a Jewish mother who was a believer, and a Greek father. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium, and Paul wanted to take him along with him, so he took and circumcised him, on account of the Jews in those regions, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they passed from city to city they handed over to the brothers for their observance the injunctions which had been adopted by the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Thus the churches kept gaining in faith and increasing in numbers day by day.

**Paragraph 2. THE FURTHER JOURNEY ACROSS ASIA MINOR. Verses 6-10.**

Then they crossed the Phrygian and Galatian territory, for they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Word in Asia. When, however, they reached the border of Mysia they tried to make their way into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not permit them. So they passed by Mysia and came down to Troas. Here a vision appeared to Paul one night: a Macedonian was standing and making appeal to him, saying,

“Cross over into Macedonia and help us.”



## [COMMENTARY]

its famous capital, Ephesus, was to be the scene of his activities for years to come. It was his intention to cross it from the highlands to the coast, preaching in city after city along the great south road until he reached Ephesus, which metropolis had been in his thought as a possible goal on his first foreign tour. At the first favorable point, however, where he decided with Silas that they might wisely begin their work, the Holy Spirit peremptorily forbade any preaching at all anywhere in Asia and yet seemed to sanction their further advance. Turning northward, they planned to make for the next province, Bithynia, and after days of travel, just as they were about to enter it, again the Spirit thwarts their designs and drives them straight west to the Ægean Sea. They cross Mysia, a district of Asia where still they dare not preach, and come out at Troas, just south of the Dardanelles. Professor Walter Leaf, in one of his late books entitled "Troy, a Study in Homeric Geography," shows what the location of ancient Troy, which lay just above Troas, meant to the ancient classical world. For hundreds of years it was the natural key to the commercial prosperity or conquest of either Greece in Europe or greater Greece in Asia. When Paul and Silas came down from the Anatolian plateau and looking across the Troad, saw that little hill crowned with gleaming palaces and porticos, they gazed upon the ninth city which had successively risen out of its own ruins since the days of its foundations centuries before Priam. As they looked upon the white crested sea they said, "Surely, we can now turn southward and enter Pergamum and Thyatira at least, and see if the Spirit will not be pleased to accept our services there." But again, they are diverted and this time by a vision in which Paul sees a man of Macedonia, standing as it were on the shore opposite Troas and calling, loudly, "Come across to Macedonia and help us!" The Apostles at once decide what this means and embark on the very next vessel, crossing for Neapolis of Macedonia. The last verse in this paragraph introduces clearly its writer as a member of the party which accompanied Paul from Troas to Philippi. Renan and Ramsay have agreed that Luke was the "man from Macedonia." Others think that Luke here inserts as elsewhere excerpts from the diary of one of his "sources" without adapting it to the third person as he usually does in his book. Of course, it is not possible now to determine who is included in "we," and the natural view to take is as far from difficulty as any other, namely, that Luke was with Paul at least wherever he uses "we," and falls



## [COMMENTARY]

into this direct way of speaking for that reason, or that he was with Paul on all his tours and only occasionally discloses that fact. The latter theory goes well with the argument based on the prevailing similarity of language in all parts of Acts as textual students widely admit.

**Paragraph 3. THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK IN EUROPE.**  
Verses 11-15.

The winds are favorable. The ship makes a straight course across to the beautiful island of Samothrace the first day, and after lying to off shore as the wind fails with the light, the following day they proceed on their voyage and land in Neapolis, the port of Philippi. In chapter xx we see that when the winds were contrary this same trip took five days. From Neapolis they go up to Philippi, and for the first time since leaving Pisidia are permitted to feel that they can here help heal the world's sin. When Paul saw the splendid almost modern Roman city of Philippi and realized that in its vicinity Brutus and Cassius had only a century earlier gone down in defeat before the Triumvirate, Antony, Octavian, afterward the Emperor Augustus, and Lepidus, thereby ending the old Republican regime and thus making possible the Empire, he may have felt for the first time that Rome itself lay inevitably before him. There was evidently no synagogue in Philippi, and although a small Jewish "place of prayer" was found by the river outside the walls, it was not the resort of men nor was its most prominent woman patroness a Jewess but a convert or proselyte. Lydia of Thyatira was a woman of means, as her business and household indicated, and also her ability to entertain freely, or of course Paul, Silas, Timothy, and possibly Luke, could not have accepted the generous invitation of her hospitality. She was probably a widow and another of that remarkable group of fine women whom Luke is always bringing into the foreground. It is also to be noted that Luke is right both in reflecting a more liberal social attitude toward women in Macedonia than in Achæa and in Jewish than in Gentile communities.

**Paragraph 4. CONFLICT WITH DEMONS AND MAGISTRATES.** Verses 16-24.

Lydia had her counterpart in the demon-possessed slave girl, a type of mixed clairvoyance and ventriloquism, suggesting the

## [TRANSLATION]

So as soon as he had seen the vision we tried at once to go on unto Macedonia, coming to the conclusion that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**Paragraph 3. THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK IN EUROPE.**

Verses 11-15.

Therefore, setting sail from Troas, we made a straight run to Samothrace and on the next day reached Neapolis. Thence we went on to Philippi, a Roman colony and the foremost city of that part of Macedonia. In that city we were staying for a number of days. Now on the Sabbath we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we thought there would be a place of prayer, and sitting down we began to talk to the women who had assembled. Among those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple, of the city Thyatira. She was a very devout woman whose heart the Lord had opened to give heed to what Paul was saying. So when she and her household had been baptized, she pleaded with us, saying, "If you really consider me a true believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house."

And she compelled us to do it.

**Paragraph 4. CONFLICT WITH DEMONS AND MAGISTRATES. Verses 16-24.**

Now, it happened one day as we were going to the place of prayer that a slave girl with a divining spirit met us, who made a great deal of money for her masters by her fortune-telling. She kept following Paul and the rest of us, crying out,

## [COMMENTARY]

frenzied Pythian priestess, as Luke's term suggests. So capable was her gift of profitable manipulation that a syndicate made wealth thereby. Like most of her kind, she had powers of discernment very unusual and her enslaved soul recognized its thralldom and rebelled. For several Sabbaths, at least, she hovered on the outskirts of the little gathering by the riverside, and as Paul and Silas came and went away, followed them with distressing shrieks like those of a lost soul crying out,

"These are servants of God Himself; they can bring us salvation!"

Of course the Apostles knew the woman did not sense the full import of her words, and yet they could not help but pity her deeply and wonder at the foul iniquity of those who owned her. They also feared lest her persistent attentions might compromise their cause and embarrass Lydia and the rest. After long hesitation and much prayer, Paul determined, if possible, to save her and at the same time end the annoyance. He, therefore, took the case in hand, and in the name of Jesus exorcised the demon completely. But Paul and Silas had to suffer shamefully for their merciful act, and, though Romans themselves, were so severely dealt with in the name of Roman citizenship, that Roman law was set aside in the interest of race hatred, for the clamor raised against the Apostles as meddlesome Jews overruled not only their protest but all reason and justice besides. The slave girl's owners got the ear of the mob and the Prætors without hindrance. The latter hurried their victims on to the lictors and Paul and Silas were stripped and flogged and flung into the inner keep of the common jail almost before they could draw breath. When their feet were finally roughly locked in the stocks they realized that this was a plain case of satanic persecution, which they must take in the spirit of their Master and turn somehow into a great victory for His name.

**Paragraph 5. THE CONVERSION OF THE PHILIPPIAN  
JAILER. Verses 25-34.**

They began to pray, and found such communion so sweet that soon they fell into singing, making use of some of the grand Old Testament psalms, possibly adapted by some Antiochian musician to Christian use. With their rise in spirits their voices grew louder until the prison rang with the melody, both unusual and wonderfully appealing, and the prisoners were caught and deeply moved by its spell. Then came the earth tremor, shaking down the door

## [TRANSLATION]

"These men are slaves of the Most High God; they are announcing you news of a Way of Salvation."

This she continued doing for a considerable period until Paul, thoroughly annoyed by it, turned and said to the spirit,

"In the name of Christ I command you to come out of her."

And it came out of her at once. When her owners, however, saw the hope of their gain gone they seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the public square before the magistrates, and, leading them up to the Prætors, they said:

"These men here are causing a great disturbance in our city. They are Jews, announcing customs which it is not possible for us Romans either to accept or practice."

The crowd also joined forces against them, and the Prætors, after having their garments stripped from them, ordered them to be beaten. After they had received a great many lashes the officers threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to guard them safely. He, on getting so strict an order, put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**Paragraph 5. THE CONVERSION OF THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER. Verses 25-34.**

Now, about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, while the prisoners listened to them, when suddenly there was a great earthquake which shook the prison to its foundations, and on the instant all the doors flew open and every-one's chains fell off. Then the jailer, roused from his sleep and seeing the doors of the prison open, drew his sword and was about to kill

## [COMMENTARY]

posts and crossbars, and strangely rending the walls just where the fastenings pierced them. The jailer, confused by the din, yet realizing that his prisoners might escape, seizes his sword to commit suicide. But Paul saves his life, cheerily assuring him that none had gone nor intended to; so he has his deputies secure the other prisoners, too startled by all that is occurring to make their escape before it is too late, and then approaches Paul and Silas with penitent inquiries, showing that the Apostolic teaching had by no means been confined to the riverside or to the few women, and that he well knew in his heart what kind of salvation the street woman had referred to, and that he and all sinful men needed. The fine spirit of Paul and Silas and the calm equanimity they had displayed that desperate afternoon, and now in an earthquake, having saved his life already assures the jailer that these Jewish prisoners have the key to life eternal. He brings them to the outer ward. He orders water to be brought. He carefully sponges their wounded backs, restores their outer garments, and adds fresh linen from his own stores.

"O, sirs, is there any salvation for me?" he cries with tears streaming down his face.

"Yes, indeed," say the Apostles. "Salvation for you and all who are here . . . Believe in the Word of God . . . Believe in the gospel of Jesus. He is the Saviour from sin. . . . Believe it and you and all yours shall be saved."

"Come into my house," says the jailer. "Come and tell us all this beautiful teaching. Come and have food and refreshment and tell us more of this wonderful truth."

As they finally baptize the jailer's entire household, Paul and Silas see why God had not permitted them to escape the insane frenzy of the mob the previous day and more songs are sung before that Philippian jail is quiet again.

### **Paragraph 6: RELEASE AND DEPARTURE OF PAUL AND SILAS. Verses 35-40.**

For some reason not clearly disclosed, the lictors appeared at the prison on the following morning with an order signed by the Prætors for the immediate release of Paul and Silas. The jailer is overjoyed and at once conveys it to his guests, the lictors waiting below meanwhile to see it executed. Paul goes down with the jailer. He sees in this document an admission of complete

## [TRANSLATION]

himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled. But Paul called out in a loud voice,

“Do yourself no violence, for we are all here.”

Then he called for lights, and rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas, and leading them outside, exclaimed,

“O, sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

“Believe on the Lord Jesus,” they answered, “and you and your household will be saved.”

And they told him and every-one that was in his house the Word of the Lord. Then he took them at that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and he and all his house were baptized. Moreover, he took them up into his house and placed food before them, and rejoiced with all his household because he believed in God.

**Paragraph 6. RELEASE AND DEPARTURE OF PAUL AND SILAS. Verses 35-40.**

When morning dawned the Prætors sent their lictors with orders, “Release those men.” So the jailer announced his orders to Paul.

“The Prætors,” he said, “have sent to release you. Now then, come, take your departure in peace.”

Paul, however, answered: “They scourged us in the open market place without a trial, though we are Roman citizens! They threw us into jail, and now are they going to send us off secretly? By no means! Let them come here and take us out themselves.” The lictors repeated these words to the Prætors, who when they heard the men were Roman citizens became alarmed. They therefore went to pacify them, brought them out of the prison,



## [COMMENTARY]

breakdown in the case against him and Silas. The Prætors must have learned by some means, quite possibly through Lydia or her attorney, that Paul and Silas were utterly innocent of causing any illegal disturbance in the city or of teaching any doctrine subversive of morals or good government. Lydia may even have arranged to buy the slave girl and reimburse her owners. At any rate, the admission of miscarriage of justice on the part of the Prætors was clear. Paul decides that he and Silas must stand by their Philippian friends and give them all the benefit they can arising from their Roman citizenship. He, therefore, tells the lictors to report back to their masters that to subject Romans like him and his companion to the rods of the lictors was illegal; that it was especially so if done with intent to cause public humiliation before a rabble in open forum or market place; that the offense was triply heinous if no legal process nor judgment had taken place, and, finally, that they would refuse to leave the prison until the Prætors came personally and made amends in as open and public a manner as they had disgraced them the day preceding. This soon brings its intended results.

## [TRANSLATION]

and courteously asked them to leave the city. So they left the prison and went to the house of Lydia, and after meeting the brothers and encouraging them they departed.

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## [COMMENTARY]

The chief officials of the city visit the jail. They ask to see Paul and Silas. They implore the Apostles to overlook the irregularity and assure them that if they will only leave the city, nothing more shall be heard of the action concerning the slave girl and her cure. This was really a great victory for the Apostles and gave added standing to the group of believers which was already of marked credit to the cause. They retire for a few days of quiet and earnest conference at the house of Lydia, and in due time take up their journey on the great Egnatian Road, leading directly west toward Rome. Some hold that Luke was left at Philippi.

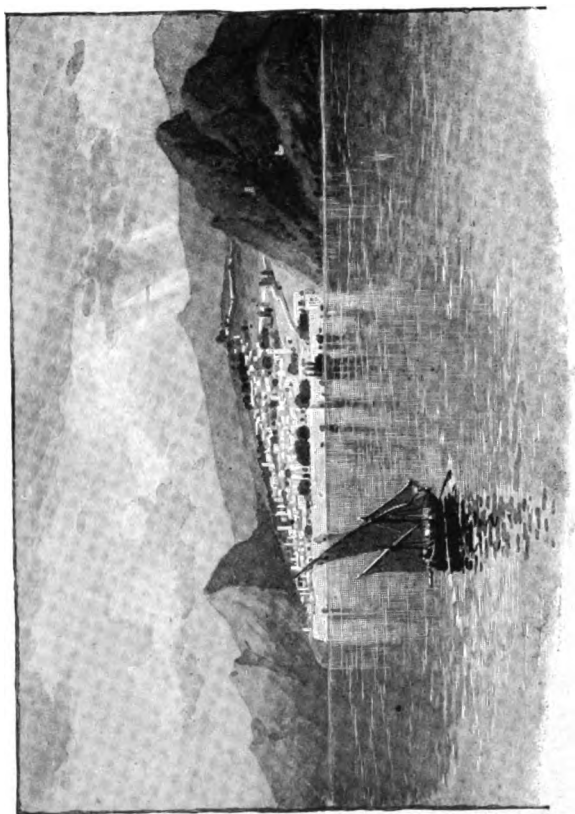
## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. PARTIAL SUCCESS AT THESSALONICA.** Verses 1-9.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy, and, we believe, Luke, determined that they would press on to a city, before settling down again, where there were more Jews and the atmosphere and basis of a synagogue to work with. Probably for this reason they did not stop more than a day or a night in the otherwise important and inviting cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia but passed on to Thessalonica. Here they found a great colony of Hebrews and a well-established synagogue. Going to worship with their fellow countrymen, as was the custom of Paul and Silas, they soon felt free to make known their new views about the meaning and fulfillment of the Scriptures, and for three weeks the usual course of gradually winning a considerable number of Jews to their opinion and a much larger contingent of proselytes and wellto do women followed. There were, however, far larger numbers who would not accept the truth, but they felt that they had to resort to unscrupulous and very extreme measures to stem the rising tide. They succeeded in actually raising a mob movement in the market place quite like that at Philippi, "setting the whole city in an uproar." The host of the Apostles was evidently a Jew named Jason, and to his house the rabble is led for mischief. Not finding Paul or Silas, who were fortunately out, they lay hold of Jason himself and some other of the recent converts, dragging them before the Politarchs, charging them with sedition in harboring and abetting foreigners who openly taught allegiance to a greater Emperor than Cæsar. The speakers evidently knew in some way of the widespread preaching and the transforming effect of the gospel which had already turned many communities "upside down," and no doubt enlarged freely upon the fact. Possibly some traveling magician from Philippi had taken a share in the situation. Jason and his friends, of course, could not be imprisoned or punished, but the



THESSALONICA



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

[TRANSLATION]

#### **Paragraph 1. PARTIAL SUCCESS AT THESSALONICA.**

Verses 1-9.

Now, when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia they arrived at Thessalonica, where they found a Jewish synagogue. Following his custom, Paul went to it, and for three Sabbaths discussed with them matters from the Scriptures, fully explaining to them and quoting passages to prove that the Christ had to suffer and to rise again from the dead.

"And this Jesus," said he, "of whom I am telling you, this is the Christ Himself." Some of them were persuaded, and threw in their lot with Paul and Silas, including a great throng of devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. The Jews, however, roused to jealousy, assembled some worthless fellows from the streets, and when they had formed a mob kept the city in a continual uproar. They even attacked Jason's house and tried to bring out Paul and Silas before the populace. But when they could not find them they proceeded to drag Jason and some of the brothers before the Politarchs, shouting loudly,

"These men who have set the world upside down have reached here. Jason has welcomed them, and they all set aside the authority of Cæsar, declaring that there is an entirely different Emperor than he—a man called Jesus."

## [COMMENTARY]

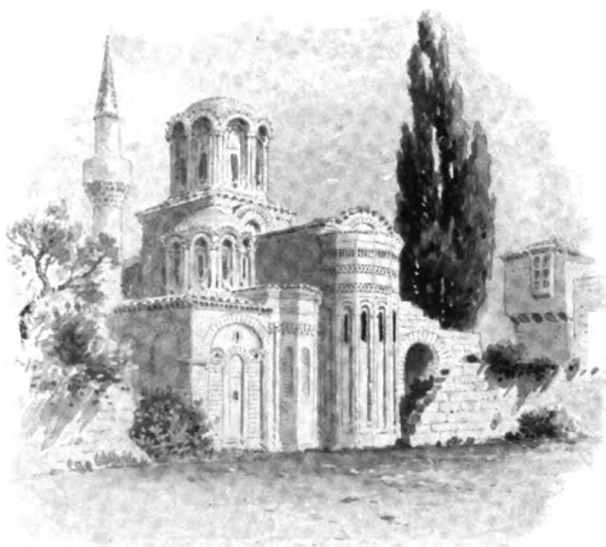
law strangely enough made it possible for those peaceable men to be placed under bonds to keep the peace, and this was done to appease their warlike fellow townsmen.

**Paragraph 2. PREACHING CONTINUED AT BEROEA.****Verses 10-15.**

That night Paul and Silas were informed of the state of things, and little as they relished it, at once determined to relieve their friends of any further annoyance, and to this end left the city. Though going in haste, of course ample provision was made for their comfort and attendance on the journey down to Beroea, a rather secluded town, about fifty miles southwestward, and where probably it was known that the Jews of the local synagogue were more truly pious and devout. In any case, they were conveyed directly to the synagogue and found the conditions there most agreeable. Nothing could please Paul more than to find his countrymen tenacious and deeply concerned in their interest in rightly understanding and obeying the Word of God. We have here the true key to his custom of going first to the synagogue and taking up the Scriptures as the basis of all his appeals to his fellow Jews. His success everywhere with open-minded and intelligent readers of the Old Testament is proof of his power, no less than the extreme enmity which he evoked everywhere on the part of bigoted or ignorant literalists. Again at Beroea, success comes so completely and so soon that news, reaching the metropolis Thessalonica at length of Paul's preaching the word of God in that rustic town, stirs up again the fires of fanaticism and the battle is opened anew. To avoid any unseemly and unprofitable controversy immediate flight is planned; the fact of Paul's friends taking full charge and going on with him to Athens also suggests that he was not physically in fighting trim, and his sending back for Timothy and Silas to come to him soon points in the same direction. Despite the widespread opinion that Luke was still in Philippi, we see no convincing proof that he was not Paul's closest companion through all of these scenes, and especially at Athens.

**Paragraph 3. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE AT ATHENS. Verses****16-22.**

Why Paul was left in Athens alone in any case, and especially if one of his sick turns had seized him, is difficult to understand.



ANCIENT CHURCH AT SALONICA





## [TRANSLATION]

When they heard these things, both the crowds and the Politarchs were alarmed, and after binding over Jason and the rest to keep the peace they let them go.

**Paragraph 2. PREACHING CONTINUED AT BEROËA.**  
Verses 10-15.

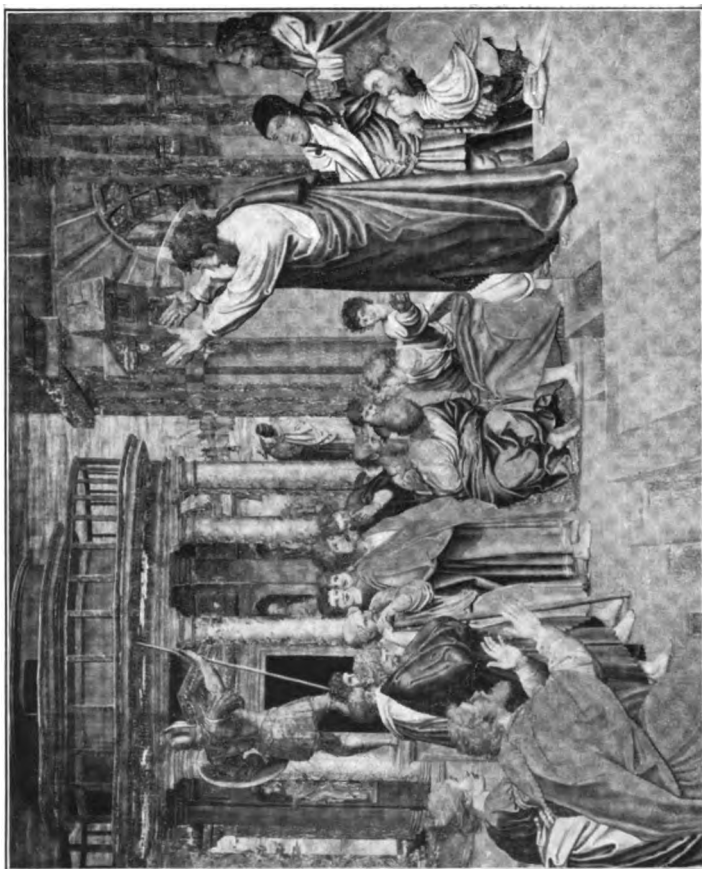
That night the brothers sent off Paul and Silas to Beroëa. When they reached there they went to the Jewish synagogue, whose members were nobler-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word with all eagerness of mind, and day by day searched the Scriptures to see if the new teaching were true. In this way many came to believe as well as a considerable number of Greek women of prominence, and of men. When, however, the Jews of Thessalonica learned that Paul had openly preached the Word of God in Beroëa, they came there also, and roused the mobs to the point of riot. Immediately then the brothers sent off Paul on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy stayed right there. Those who were escorting Paul accompanied him as far as Athens, and then returned, taking a message to Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

**Paragraph 3. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE AT ATHENS. Verses**  
16-22.

While Paul awaited them in Athens his soul was roused within him as he observed that the city was full of idols. So he began to discuss with the Jews and devout-minded, and also day by day with those he happened to meet in the market place. There also encountered him some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, some of whom asked,

## [COMMENTARY]

In case he were ill and in Dr. Luke's charge, and had gone to Athens at least partly because it was a place where drugs, baths, and advice might be had, as well as one where his mind might be entertained, all is plain. He does not seem to have planned any very serious labor at Athens, and this does not agree with as energetic a spirit in such an illustrious center of the world's thought unless he were there for rest and recuperation. Be that as it may, however, Paul was soon out of his lodgings and was wandering all about that great city filled with wonder and admiration at the extent of its interest in problems other than commercial. He found it to be a veritable pantheon—its shrines, temples, altars, statues, at least superficially proclaimed an interest in every form and phase of religion such as he had not elsewhere seen. The great Greek traveler Pausanias says that in his day the Athenians had more than other Greeks a zeal for religion, and Petronius, the Latin critic, is said to have sarcastically remarked that it was easier in Athens to find a god than a man. Paul had leisure to read the inscriptions and even quite thoroughly to go over the city, amazed at the ingenuity and variety of workmanship and indication of taste displayed in deifying every virtue, passion, and aspiration of the human mind. He even found an altar dedicated in due form to "A God Unknown." Now, to claim that Paul had no archaeological interest in this great city, and nothing but a spirit of disgust with its manifestation of devotion to art, is certainly gratuitous in view of his wide rambles and observations, and especially in view of the fact that he himself at length found and read in that veritable forest of inscribed pedestals one inscribed to "A God Unknown." Paul was awaiting his fellow workers and traveling companions in Athens, therefore he was not there for work, but because it was a good place in which to wait. His spirit, however, was quickened by his surroundings and he began to work. He entered the local synagogue and stirred up both orthodox and proselytes, and on week days went among the groups of men in the market places and public squares, talking familiarly with them in Greek and often more or less formally as he had been wont to do in the market towns of Asia Minor. So common a figure did he become in the open-air debates about the Agora that he was more or less widely spoken of as "The Jesus Man," or "The Resurrection Preacher," or "That Eccentric Hebrew," or "The Miscellaneous Philosopher," or "The Religious Scrap Collector"—the term depending on the viewpoint of the observer. Finally the philosophers



PAUL BEFORE THE AREOPAGUS



[TRANSLATION]

"What would this philosophic scrap-collector say?"

Others said,

"He seems to be advance agent for some foreign deities."

This last was because he kept preaching the good news about "Jesus" and "the resurrection." At length they took him with them to the Areopagus, asking:

"Can we know what this sort of teaching of which you are telling is? For you are bringing to our attention matters which sound strange to us. We therefore wish to know just what they mean." (Now all the Athenians used to give their whole leisure to nothing so much as to telling about or listening to the latest novelty.) So Paul took his stand in the middle of the Areopagus and said:

**Paragraph 4. PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE AREOPAGUS.**

Verses 23-34.

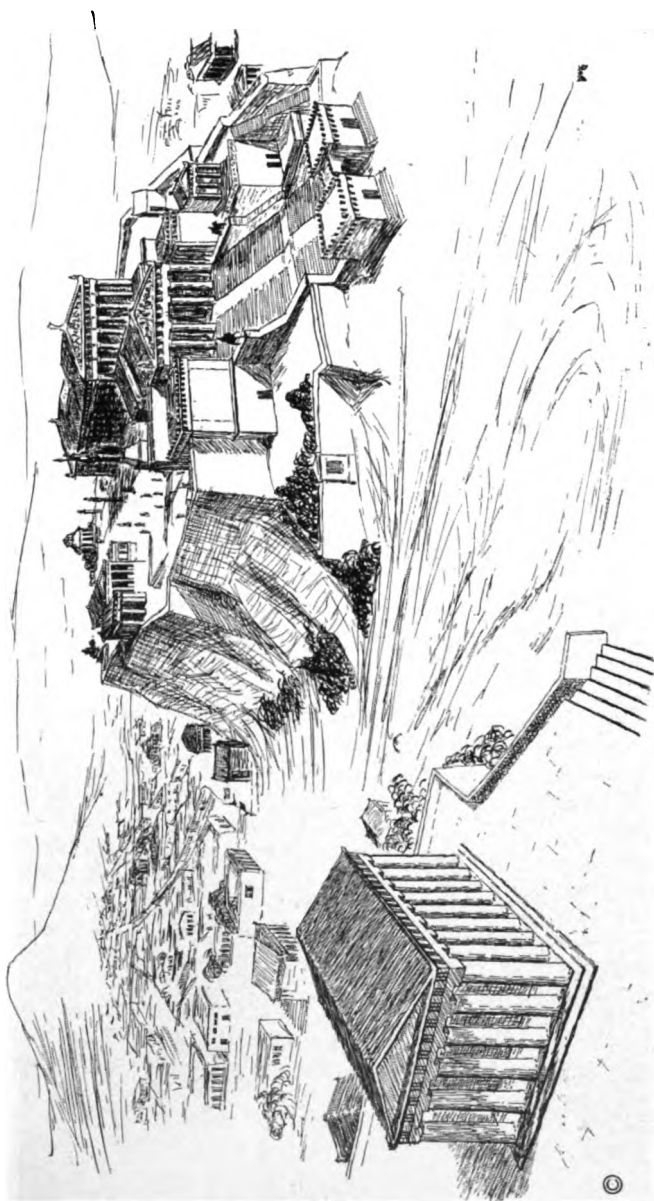
"Men of Athens, I observe on all hands how very religious you are. For as I was going along and looking at your objects of worship I even found an altar with the inscription: 'To an Unknown God.' Whom, then, you worship without knowing Him, I am now proclaiming to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of Heaven and earth, does not dwell in man-made shrines, nor is He served by human hands as though He lacked anything, for He is the One who gives to all men life and breath and everything else. Moreover, He made from one source every race of men to live on all the face of the earth, and determined their allotted seasons and the limits of their settlement, so that they might search for God if perchance they might feel

## [COMMENTARY]

going and coming across the Agora became casually interested and then fascinated with this strange and rapid speaker with his Cilician brogue yet excellent vocabulary and ideas. Several of them, both Stoics and Epicureans, being members of the Areopagus, decide to ask him to come to their common meeting place and speak especially to them, and as they seem altogether courteous and sincere in their request, he consents.

**Paragraph 4. PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE AREOPAGUS.**  
Verses 23-24.

The Areopagus was no doubt the name both of a kind of commission on morals and of a hill or eminence opposite the west front of the Acropolis, where they were wont to assemble. Paul is presented in due form to the gathering, which undoubtedly included many not regular members that day, and, taking his stand in the center of the group, made a speech which for grace, dignity, thought, and quotability, passes anything of equal length in letters. Of course Luke gives us but the introduction and general line of thought, but he does it so well that we need no more. In the account Paul states the argument against idolatry in unanswerable form, declares the spirituality of the one supreme God in terms that their own poets had employed, preaches the guilt of sin and demand for repentance, proclaims righteousness as the only standard of morals, Jesus the sole Judge in the Day of Judgment, and His resurrection the proof of His power and the hope of our immortality. What other or more serious subjects could Paul have introduced? As usual, his hearers fall into two opinions: the one scoffs and goes away, the other lingers to have further conference and gladly believes. Among the latter are a man and a woman of the highest social and intellectual standing in Athens, and many others of lesser rating in Athenian society but whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. And from that visit of Paul to Athens sprang a church which has surely equalled in stability and influence any other which even his strategic skill ever planted. At the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893, the Greek Bishop of Xante presented an argument based upon irrefutable historical data that the church of Dionysius and Damaris in Athens had continued an unbroken course from its founding at the hands of Paul to the present day.



RECONSTRUCTION OF THE AREOPAGUS AND ACROPOLIS AS IT WAS IN PAUL'S DAY





## [TRANSLATION]

their way to Him and find Him, especially as He is not far from every one of us. For it is in Him that we live and move and exist, just as some of your own poets have said,

“‘FOR HIS OFFSPRING ALSO ARE WE.’

So then, since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think the divine nature resembles gold or silver or marble, or anything created by human art or invention.

“Having, then, overlooked those times of ignorance, God now enjoins upon all men everywhere to repent. He has even gone so far as to set a day on which He is about to judge the world in righteousness, in the person of a Man Whom He has destined for the purpose; and He has given every-one proof of this by raising Him from the dead.”

When, however, they heard of a resurrection of dead men some began to jeer, but others said,

“We will hear you about that again some time.”

Then Paul withdrew from the assembly. But some of the members joined him and believed, and among these were the Areopagite Dionysius and a woman named Damaris, and with them there were others of lesser standing.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. WORK AMONG THE JEWS AT CORINTH.** Verses 1-6.

Paul seems to have recovered his physical strength at Athens before Silas and Timothy could get to him, and again we have need of claiming Luke's presence, for it is not like Paul to travel alone, even though in good health. He evidently was also running short of funds, and as Corinth was a much more active labor center than Athens, wished to engage in his trade and not let his Macedonian friends know about his condition nor feel obligated to send him aid. It must be remembered that Paul had engaged in manual labor at Thessalonica, and that at least twice while he was there the Philipian church had sent him assistance. In any case, he now again wishes work and finds it in Corinth. Possibly, also, the lure of Rome seized him again, and he felt that if he were able to lay by a fund for the purpose before Silas and Timothy joined him, he might persuade them to go there with him. But Providence was blocking that purpose, for the Emperor Claudius at that very season was banishing from the capital every Hebrew. This brought to Corinth most opportunely that gifted Christian pair, Aquila and Priscilla, and Paul, making their acquaintance, probably at the synagogue where he spoke, attracted their attention and interest, was asked to their house, and, being a stranger, gladly accepted. Finding that he was also a tentmaker, they took him into their home and found him employment. We here see one of the sources of Paul's wonderful knowledge of the personnel and state of the church at Rome as revealed in the last chapter of the Roman Epistle, which was written years before he himself saw Rome.

At Corinth Paul found his field of work in the synagogue for some time and was so absorbed that by the time Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, what with his daily toil and Sabbath discussions he was fast losing his buoyancy of physical and mental spirit. Though Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul shows great wisdom in laying a basis wherever possible on solid Hebrew foundations. Three Jewish institutions which were thus utilized proved of in-

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

[TRANSLATION]

#### Paragraph 1. WORK AMONG THE JEWS AT CORINTH. Verses 1-6.

After this Paul left Athens and came to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had lately come from Italy with Priscilla his wife, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to depart from Rome. He went to their home and, because they belonged to the same trade as himself, remained with them, and they worked together, for they were tentmakers. Every Sabbath Paul used to debate in the synagogue and endeavor to persuade both Jews and Greeks. Thus when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia he was earnestly preaching the Word, witnessing in every way to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. When, however, they set themselves to oppose and abuse him he shook his garment in protest, saying to them :

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[COMMENTARY]

estimable value both to Paul and to Jesus in the early days of Christianity—the Sabbath, the synagogue, and the Scriptures. With all his powers he appeals to his own people first, and everywhere advances very soon to make fierce frontal attacks in case they do not capitulate, and at Corinth, as elsewhere, splits the Jewish community into two parties. Upon his opponents, who can only meet him by abuse, he turns and shakes the dust from his garments, and says,

“From now on I go to the Gentiles.”

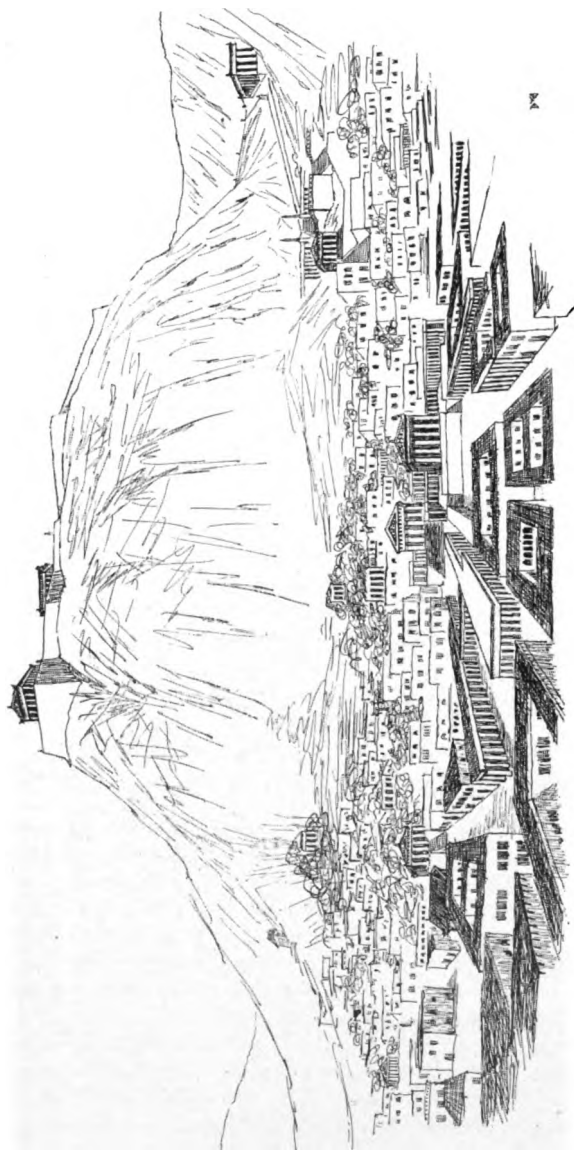
## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 2. TURNING TO THE CORINTHIAN GREEKS.**  
**Verses 7-11.**

Of course Paul would hardly have taken so violent a leave of the synagogue unless the issue was very clear cut, and this appears to have been so from the fact that both Crispus, its official head, with his family, withdrew at the same time and that a Roman citizen, Gaius Titius Justus (compare Rom. xvi, 22), threw open his large house next door for worship, Justus himself and many other Corinthians taking their stand with Paul. That this outcome had, however, its sinister side is shown by the vision which was granted to Paul to encourage and strengthen him and the assurance that no attack, however venomous, should harm him or his influence. He therefore settles down for a prolonged campaign, and for the first time since leaving Antioch is permitted and encouraged by the Spirit to stay and work out the problem of conquering a pagan community of strategic importance. All in all, Paul's experience in Corinth proved to be truly epoch-making both for him and for the early Christian faith. The letters he quite probably wrote from that church—First and Second Thessalonians and Romans, and some hold Galatians—during his two periods there and those he wrote to that church also, perhaps four in number, take up all of the greater problems of New Testament theology and church administration.

**Paragraph 3. THE TRIAL BEFORE GALLIO, THE PRO-CONSUL. Verses 12-17.**

From a recent inscription found at Delphi it is learned that Junius Gallio, a brother of Seneca, the famous Roman statesman and philosopher, was Proconsul of the province of Achaia from the spring of A. D. 52 to 53, so that we have here a date in determining Paul's time at Corinth. Paul had doubtless come to Corinth in the autumn of 51, and the action before Gallio fell soon after he came into office. The Jews, supposing that they could carry the case by main strength, failed to employ their ordinary method of laying the attack on civil grounds alone, and found in Gallio, who had so recently come from Rome and sympathized with the Emperor's prejudice against them, one deaf to their clamor. Even Paul, though ready to defend himself, was not permitted to address the court; the case was thrown out and the lictors ordered to clear the



CORINTH RECONSTRUCTED, WITH TEMPLE OF VENUS ON ACRO-CORINTHUS  
IN BACKGROUND

©



## [TRANSLATION]

"Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clear of it; from now on I will go to the Gentiles."

**Paragraph 2. TURNING TO THE CORINTHIAN GREEKS.**  
Verses 7-11.

So he left and removed to the home of a devout worshiper named Titius Justus, whose house stood next door to the synagogue. Moreover, Crispus, the head of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, with his entire household, and as they kept listening many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized. And one night in a vision the Lord said to Paul,

"Have no fear, but keep on speaking, and by no means cease, for I am with you and no one shall attack you to your injury, for I have many people in this city."

So he settled down there for a year and six months, teaching them the Word of God.

**Paragraph 3. THE TRIAL BEFORE GALLIO, THE PRO-CONSUL.** Verses 12-17.

But when Gallio became Proconsul of Achaia the Jews made a combined attack on Paul and brought him before the court.

"This fellow," they said, "is persuading men to worship God contrary to law."

As Paul was just about to begin his reply, Gallio answered the Jews:

"O you Jews! if it had been some crime or act of villainy I might have reasonably listened to you, but if these are questions of terms and names and matters of your own law, attend to them yourselves. In such matters I am not willing to be judge."



## [COMMENTARY]

tribunal. The native Greeks, taking their cue from the new Proconsul, then fell upon the Jews, and Sosthenes, the successor to Crispus, as head of the synagogue, who no doubt was the most active leader of his party, received a mishandling which Gallio thought too insignificant to interfere with. Not only the verisimilitude but the historic accuracy of Luke's record here is matter worthy of special remark.

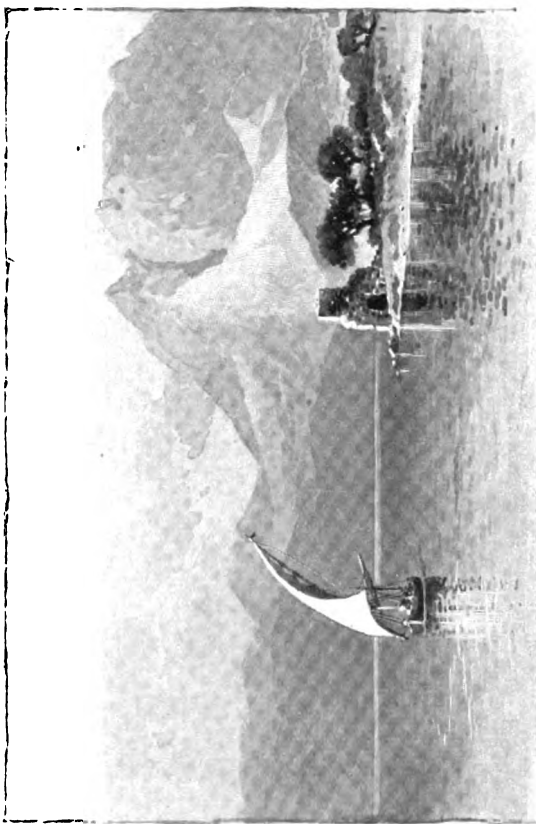
**Paragraph 4. THE RETURN AND REPORT TO JERUSALEM AND ANTIOCH. Verses 18-23.**

The outcome of his day in court must have gratified Paul and confirmed the conviction his vision had brought him. At any rate, he stayed right on at Corinth and kept on speaking with great success until quite probably another attack of his chronic ailment led him to desist. At Cenchreæ, where Phœbe was a deaconess, he had his head shaved, possibly in token of a vow following deliverance from an attack of sickness. The Beza text also says he wished greatly to reach Jerusalem "before the coming Passover feast." For some reason Aquila and Priscilla also leave on the same ship and go as far as Ephesus, Paul only going ashore while the ship was in port there, probably a Sabbath day. He visited, at all events, the synagogue and so interested the Jews that they pressed him to stay longer with them, but on account of his vow and other reasons Paul could only promise, God willing, to return there at some early day. Landing at last at Cæsarea, he goes up to Jerusalem, fulfills his vow, exchanges greetings with the brethren, and at the end of the feast goes down to Antioch. Here Paul makes report of his nearly two years' travel, and soon appears to have felt that his promise to Ephesus must be fulfilled. He therefore starts out early that same summer (A. D. 53) and goes overland, as in his second tour, as far as the western frontier of Phrygia, where he took the great Roman Road, directly across the Province Asia to Ephesus. Wherever his course coincided with former journeys he went slowly, preaching to the growing congregations and doing all he could to strengthen them, but after leaving Galatia he no doubt pushed on without stop to the coast.

**Paragraph 5. THE MINISTRY OF APOLLOS IN EPHEBUS AND CORINTH. Verses 24-28.**

From what we now know of the vast wealth and prominence of





CENCHREÆ

## [TRANSLATION]

He even drove them from the court. Then they all fell upon Sosthenes, the head of the synagogue, and began to beat him right before the court, and Gallio paid not the least attention to it.

**Paragraph 4. THE RETURN AND REPORT TO JERUSALEM AND ANTIOCH. Verses 18-23.**

Now, Paul stayed on quite a while after this, and then took leave of the brothers and sailed for Syria. With him were Priscilla and Aquila. He had his head shaved at Cenchreæ because of a vow he had made. Then they came to Ephesus, and there Paul left them. He, however, went to the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. And when they asked him to stay longer he declined, but on leaving said,

“God willing, I will return to you again.” So he sailed from Ephesus and landed at Cæsarea, and when he had gone up and saluted the church in Jerusalem he went down to Antioch. And after he had spent some time there he started off again, passing from place to place through the country of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming all the disciples.

**Paragraph 5. THE MINISTRY OF APOLLOS IN EPHESUS AND CORINTH. Verses 24-28.**

Meantime an Alexandrian Jew by the name of Apollos had come to Ephesus. He was a learned man and powerful in his knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been orally instructed in the Way of the Lord, and, full of burning zeal, he would tell and accurately teach the facts about Jesus, though he was acquainted only with the

## [COMMENTARY]

Alexandria in the first century not alone in the Roman Political World but in the Greek World of Philosophy and Literature, it would have been passing strange if such a work as Luke's had failed to record any reflection of these facts on the first generation of Christian history. There can be no doubt that the preachers and preaching of the gospel reached Alexandria soon after the Ascension, but the story of Luke, restricted to tracing the progress of the faith from Jerusalem to Rome, only refers to the African or other fields as they infringed upon that single line which naturally lay north of the Mediterranean Sea. Cyrene, Libya, Ethiopia, the Synagogue of the Alexandrians, all are mentioned, but only incidentally and in this way. Now comes a typical Alexandrian scholar, already a Christian and a convinced and eloquent defender of the Saviour as the promised Messiah. He crosses to Ephesus, the Greek rival of Alexandria, which with Corinth, and perhaps Antioch, made a combination of Greek cities as populous and powerful as any purely Greek cities had ever been, even in the most palmy days of the "glory that was Greece." Apollos had a mind saturated with the letter and spirit of the Old Testament and his graceful manners and language, as he spoke the purest Greek, won him great favor in the synagogue at Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla again, as at Corinth for Paul, do much for Apollos, and when he wishes to cross over to Corinth they give him letters to the leaders there, and there he has an even more happy and successful period of preaching, having had the tutelage of Aquila and Priscilla for a time at Ephesus.

## [TRANSLATION]

baptism of John. Now he began to speak openly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him they took him home and explained to him more accurately still the Way of God. Moreover, when he wished to cross over to Achaia the brothers wrote the disciples there, encouraging them to receive him cordially. And when he arrived there he was of great assistance to those who through the grace of God had believed, for he refuted the arguments of the Jews publicly with great force, demonstrating from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

## CHAPTER XIX

### PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. PENTECOST REPEATED AT EPHESUS. Verses 1-7.

Apollos is not altogether an exceptional case of those who only received a partial conception of the new Way. We learn from the Gospels that John the Baptist had a much wider vogue than Jesus among a certain type of Jews, and that his baptism was peculiarly popular. Since many who sincerely accepted his preaching and teaching as far as they could understand it were of the Pilgrim class, who only went up to Jerusalem from the cities of the Dispersion once in a lifetime, they had heard no other gospel. This accounts for the cases of Apollos of Alexandria and the Twelve at Ephesus, and there were doubtless many others. The case of the Twelve has been wondered at as still being in the dark even after Aquila and Priscilla had shown the Alexandrian preacher "a more excellent way." In so large a city as Ephesus they might easily have escaped either giving or receiving any notice or attention until discovered by Paul. If Paul's eyesight was poor, he had other senses which amply made up for the handicap. He could find people to help wherever he moved, and his whole life was now given to enlarging the spiritual horizon of his contemporaries. Of this his Epistles are permanent witness. Falling in with this devoted group of disciples on reaching Ephesus, he saw their lack of spiritual power and freedom, and his first question brought out the reason. They had not learned of Pentecost. They had not even been baptized into the name of Christ. They were truly penitent and truly pious but had not learned that the Messiah, whom John had heralded, had really come, nor that the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised, had been given to men. Under Paul's guidance these two steps are taken at once. To the baptism of the Baptist is added that of Jesus and then that of the Holy Spirit. As true repentance has been followed by "fruits," so the spiritual outpouring was accompanied by "signs," and these were the same

## CHAPTER XIX

### PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. PENTECOST REPEATED AT EPHESUS.**  
Verses 1-7.

It was while Apollos was at Corinth that Paul after passing through the upper provinces came down to Ephesus, where he found some disciples.

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" he asked of them.

"No," they responded. "We did not even hear that there was a Holy Spirit."

"Into what, then," he asked, "were you baptized?"

"Into the Baptism of John," they answered.

"John baptized," said Paul, "with the baptism of repentance, and said to the people that they should believe on One who was coming after him, that is on Jesus."

When they heard this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, and after Paul had laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came upon them. They began to speak with tongues and prophesied. There were in all about twelve men.

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[COMMENTARY]

as at Jerusalem and Samaria, Cæsarea and Antioch. This group of twelve thus fully endowed at the beginning of Paul's great epoch at Ephesus explains the fact Luke mentions later that soon "all Asia . . . heard the word of the Lord." Paul seems to develop new leaders wherever he goes, and to leave plenty of work for them to carry out and complete on his departure.



## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 2. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PAUL'S SUCCESS.**  
Verses 8-12.

A synagogue, the same which Paul had visited and spoken in on returning from his former tour and which had cordially invited him to stay, doubtless as cordially welcomed him back. For three months he has unparalleled freedom as a Christian Apostle in the leading synagogue in the leading city of Asia. It is rather difficult to understand why the issue did not come sooner unless we attribute it to the unusually liberal type of opinion prevailing in that Hebrew colony, as well as to Paul's greater exercise of diplomacy and forbearance than appears to have been his custom with his own stiff-necked nationals. He seems to have left the synagogue of his own option and to have withdrawn his disciples in part at least, lest a rupture arise and to avoid strife with those who were beginning to "speak evil of the Way" before the synagogue audiences. As at Corinth, he still had a great popular following, and hired the daily use—very ancient texts read "from eleven to four o'clock"—of a lecture hall and for fully two years continued almost undisturbed to teach and preach and send out missionaries to the many rich and populous cities lying along the seaboard and even a hundred miles or so inland throughout the Province Asia. His remark about fighting the wild beasts at Ephesus in the Corinthian letter (xxv, 32) is purely rhetorical, and even the great uproar which came at the end of his long ministry there was signal proof of his extraordinary success. A man whose teaching is so powerful that one hundred thousand dollars worth of books are burned at his feet as a personal tribute, a man who is assailed because he had "deluded and led off a vast number of people," and thereby endangered not only the chief business interests but the worship of the titular deity of Ephesus, surely does not need to apologize for any failure. It was here too that Paul had such marked influence as a miracle-worker and healer, rivaling Peter's demonstration at Jerusalem of like gifts some two decades earlier. His prowess in conflict with evil spirits, the real beasts of Ephesus, is proved by an instance which Luke records.

**Paragraph 3. THE EPISODE OF SCEVA'S SEVEN SONS.**  
Verses 13-20.

The compliment of attempted counterfeit is now paid Paul. The magicians have always attempted to mimic Moses and Aaron.

## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 2. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PAUL'S SUCCESS.**

Verses 8-12.

Then Paul went into the synagogue and for three months he kept speaking out fearlessly, reasoning with his hearers and trying to persuade them about the Kingdom of God. As some, however, began to be obstinate



and to refuse to believe, speaking evil of the Way before the throngs, he left the synagogue, withdrew the disciples, and held discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the inhabitants of Asia, Jews as well as Greeks, heard the Word of the Lord. God also wrought no ordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that people even carried to the sick, towels or aprons which he had used, and their diseases would leave them and evil spirits would depart.

## [COMMENTARY]

Jewish exorcisers were then common all over the empire, and, as we have seen at Samaria, Paphos, and Philippi, in one or another form opposed Christ's Apostle as they had the Master. Sceva, with his seven sons, saw Paul rescue demon-possessed men by using the name of Jesus and set out to make capital by utilizing the same charm. The disastrous outcome only served to deepen the already strong popular appreciation of the adorable Name, and the work of Paul was thereby strengthened. But the further outcome in the utter repudiation by hundreds of people of anything which had to do with magical tendencies is the fact which Luke wishes to emphasize. Ephesus, perhaps more than even Alexandria, was a world center of the sort of literature referred to in this paragraph. The discoveries of our own time amply indicate that even in Egypt charms, amulets, formulæ, letters, and incantations from Ephesus were known and widely employed. That believers still clung to and kept in their possession these documents is proof of the wide-reaching influence they exerted over the community. Such phenomena and their literary discussion, not to say enthralling fascination, engage the minds of enlightened men to this day. But the Christians at Ephesus saw a new light under Paul's teaching and largely freed themselves from this bondage. So many notable cases of actual repudiation of their books dealing with these subjects took place that as they were brought to the burning a note of their value seems to have been made and the aggregate is stated to have totaled fifty thousand denarii, representing a purchasing power to-day of well-nigh one hundred thousand dollars. Under such conditions the Word of God could not help prevailing.

**Paragraph 4. THE LABOR RIOT OF THE SILVERSMITHS.**  
**Verses 21-28.**

Paul has had his opportunity at last of preaching in Asia and now considers his mission in Ephesus for the time at least ended. He has been in correspondence with the churches in Greece and the province of Galatia and is planning on his return to Jerusalem to carry gifts from all these fields, as well as from Asia, to the mother church. Then he must see Rome. Messengers have supplemented his Epistles, and Timothy and Erastus have just left for Macedonia on this business, expecting Paul to follow soon, when an unawaited incident turns Ephesus upside down. It seems that not only the black-art publishers had suffered sad decline in their business

## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 3. THE EPISODE OF SCEVA'S SEVEN SONS.**  
Verses 13-20.

Moreover, there were some wandering Jewish exorcists who tried to invoke the name of Jesus over those who had the evil spirits, and they said,

"I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." There were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, doing this.

"Jesus I know," said the evil spirit, "and Paul I have heard of. You, however—who are you?"

And the man who had the evil spirit sprang on them, overcame them both, and so completely overpowered them that they rushed out of the house, stripped and wounded. This came to be known to every-one living at Ephesus, Jews as well as Greeks, and they were awe-struck and kept magnifying the name of the Lord Jesus. Many, moreover, of those who believed kept coming out and freely confessing and openly acknowledging their evil practices. Also several who had practiced magical arts collected their books and publicly burned them. The sum total of their value was found to be about fifty thousand pieces of silver. Thus, the word of God kept increasing steadily and prevailed.

**Paragraph 4. THE LABOR RIOT OF THE SILVERSMITHS.**  
Verses 21-28.

After all this was done Paul set his heart on going through Macedonia, Achaia, and then on to Jerusalem.

"After I get there," he said, "I must also see Rome."

So he sent off to Macedonia two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, while he himself stayed some time longer in Asia. It was just at that time when a great

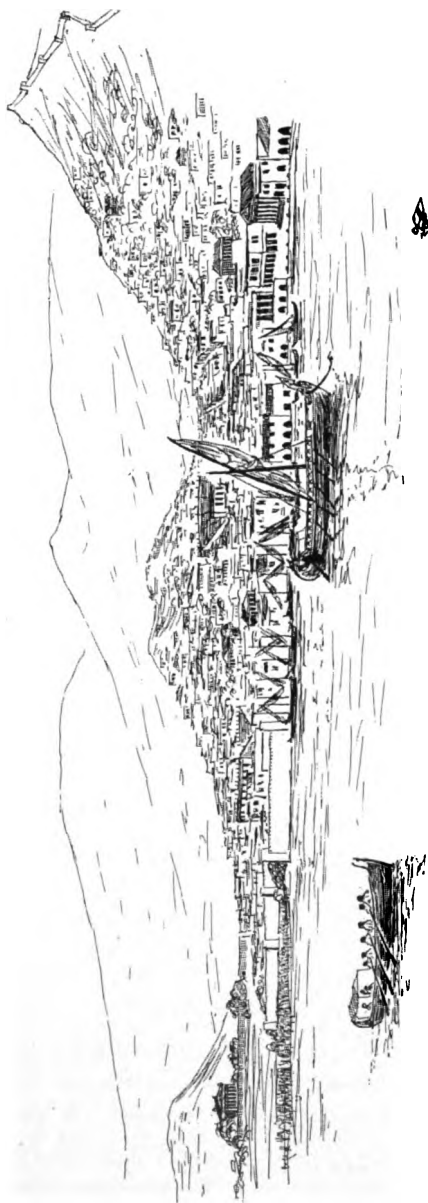
## [COMMENTARY]

through Paul's two years' course of evangelistic and enlightening services in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, but that the guild of silversmiths, whose trade was largely interested in making shrines of Diana, was also disastrously affected. Even the call for their goods from the outlying provinces had fallen to a low ebb. Demetrius, however, uses not alone the commercial argument in raising his labor riot but cleverly plays upon the nerve of religious pride and bigotry. He must have dropped in and heard Paul himself speak, for he quotes him accurately in the words, "Gods made by human hands are not gods at all." Besides the worship of Diana must be upheld no matter how the silver trade stands! Thus, it appears that "this Paul" is undermining good religion as well as good business. It is the religious appeal which carries the mob.

"Great is Ephesian Artemis!" is their cry.

**Paragraph 5. THE ADDRESSES IN THE THEATER OF ALEXANDER AND THE RECORDER. Verses 29-41.**

When the rioters reached Paul's lecture hall, he was not there. So they seized two men from Macedonia, Gaius and Aristarchus, who acknowledged themselves his traveling companions and had possibly just come after him. Then they swept on to the great theater where Ephesian affairs of civic importance were usually determined by open action. After they had left his hall Paul appears, ready it may be to start for Macedonia. He learns what has happened and insists on going to the theater but his friends detain him until certain Ephesian officials, "Asiarchs," namely, commissioners of religious festivals and public games, hastily send peremptory word from the theater that Paul must in no case come into that part of the city. Here again the highest state officers are found to be not only disposed to favor the Apostle but actually taking unasked measures to protect his life. They knew Paul and liked him, and not seeing him at the center of the mob, knew that if he were still in the city he would come to the theater at any personal risk in order to cover his friends and the Way. A period of not altogether unanimous din serves as easement to the throng. Meanwhile, some hostile Jews have had time to organize a way to utilize this misspent energy. They are now seen in a compact group surrounding a big Hebrew agitator, one pretty well known as an unscrupulous bidder for favor among the coppersmiths. Luke



EPHESUS FROM THE SEA RECONSTRUCTED—TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS ON LEFT  
THEATRE IN CENTER—MOUNT PRION ON RIGHT



## [TRANSLATION]

disturbance broke out over the Way. A silversmith, named Demetrius, who manufactured silver shrines of Diana used to furnish a good deal of business to his mechanics. These he called together, along with workmen in similar trades.

"Men," he said, "you well know that our prosperity depends upon this business. Moreover, you constantly see and hear that not only at Ephesus but almost all over Asia this Paul here has deluded and led off a vast number of people. He says that gods made by men's hands are not gods at all. So there is not only danger that this business of ours will be discredited but that even the temple of the great goddess Diana will fall into utter contempt, and that before long she will be despoiled of her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worships!"

When they heard this, bursting with rage, they began shouting,

"Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

**Paragraph 5. THE ADDRESSES IN THE THEATER OF ALEXANDER AND THE RECORDER. Verses 29-41.**

Thus the city was filled with uproar. The populace rushed with one impulse into the theater, dragging along with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's traveling companions. But when Paul wanted to go into the assembly the disciples would not let him; moreover, some of the high officials of the province who were friends of his sent word and kept appealing to him not to risk himself in the theater. Meanwhile, they were shouting, some one thing and some another, for the assembly was all in confusion; indeed, the majority did not know why



## [COMMENTARY]

mentions the fact of associate trades being involved in the day's movement. But the Hebrews have overshot the mark. To the silver trade and to native Greeks, a Jewish peddler who worshiped a Jewish God only adds fuel to the flame. The multitude has no objection to the interests he represents, but that those interests should be given the place of precedence and the people of Ephesus instructed in their rights by such a man is impossible! For two hours longer they take up their popular yell—"Great is Ephesian Artemis!" By this time the Asiarchs have conferred with the city Recorder, an officer holding a position which from many stand-points was the most influential in the metropolis. With easy hand he takes the reins and tools the mob into reason, addressing them somewhat as follows:

"Surely, no one present disputes the supremacy of Artemis, nor the fact that Ephesus is proud to be known the world over as doorkeeper to her temple and guardian of her relics which fell down from Zeus, but even religious enthusiasm must be seemly. Are they so frantic as to demand the blood of two Greek gentlemen and Romans from Macedonia who have not questioned these things nor committed any act of sacrilege? As for social conditions or matters of complaint on the part of tradesmen or working people, no city in the empire was more democratic in its government. Did they not have three regular town meetings every month? Were there no courts nor city attorneys? Had the Proconsuls resigned? Was Cæsar dead? Why, what is this beautiful theater built for and embellished at vast public expense? Did they not know that one of the fundamental laws of the empire had been trampled underfoot for half a day by this disturbance of the public peace and most disorderly strike? Not only the various trades but the bazaars, banking-houses, and even the temple of great Diana were deserted and damaged. Let every man now take off his headcovering and quietly walk out of this theater and disperse either to his home or his place of business."

[TRANSLATION]

they had come together. Then some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander whom the Jews were pushing to the front. So Alexander, waving his hand, wanted to make a defense before the people. When, however, they recognized that he was a Jew, one shout broke from them all as they roared for about two hours,

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians!”

Finally the Recorder quieted down the crowd.

“Men of Ephesus,” he said, “where is there any-one who does not know that the city of Ephesus is guardian of the temple of the Great Diana and of the statue which fell down from heaven? As all these facts are unquestioned, you ought to be calm and do nothing rash. On the other hand, you have brought these men here who are neither guilty of sacrilege nor blasphemers of our goddess. If then, Demetrius and the workmen with him have a grievance against any-one, there are court days and there are Proconsuls; let them prosecute one another. If, however, you seek anything further than this, it will have to be decided in the legal assembly. For there is even danger of our being proceeded against for to-day’s riot, there being not the slightest cause for it, nor shall we be able to answer for this disorderly gathering.”

With these words he dismissed the assembly.



DIANA OF THE  
EPHESIANS

## CHAPTER XX

### THE THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO GREECE. Verses 1-6.**

Paul makes immediate arrangements for sailing to Neapolis. Calling together his faithful disciples, a large and most important body of very able people, he commends them to God, lays out any needed plans of action in view of the local situation, no doubt urging even more aggressive diligence in evangelism than ever, and takes his departure. The testimony of his enemies, of his Epistles written from Ephesus and of those written to Ephesus and the neighboring cities, together with the fact of so large a group of Christian churches being known in western Asia Minor from this time on, proves sufficiently the success of his Ephesian campaign. His churches in Greece, however, and especially in the Peloponnesus, had meanwhile been a constant source of anxiety to him and now he goes for a time to visit them. Passing through Macedonia, probably crossing it to Illyricum (Rom. xv, 19), he comes at length to Corinth and spends three months there, to the great advantage of that strategic center. We incline to date the letter to the Romans from this time and city. Finally he books his passage by sea for Syria. Though a good delegation of trustworthy friends were to accompany him, it leaks out that there are some fanatical Jews who have also taken passage with sworn intent at some opportune moment during the voyage to take his life. No doubt the ship was to take away a large lot of pilgrims for the annual Passover at Jerusalem, and Paul and his party at the last moment fail to embark, and so his fanatical antagonists are avoided until they should meet later in the Holy City. Learning of the murderous plot, Paul postpones his plan of observing Passover, as intended, in favor of Pentecost and decides to spend the interval of nearly two months in journeying overland to Philippi and making a slower voyage from point to point along the coast

## CHAPTER XX

### THE THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR CONTINUED

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO GREECE. Verses 1-6.**

When the uproar had ceased Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had encouraged them he took formal leave and set off for Macedonia. Moreover, after he had gone through those districts and had comforted them with many a word, he came to Greece, where he stayed three months. As he was about to sail for Syria, the Jews planned to waylay him, so he decided to return through Macedonia. There accompanied him as far as Asia Sopater, son of Pyrrhus, from Beroëa; Aristarchus, and Secundus, from Thessalonica; Gaius, of Derbe; and Timothy, as well as Tychicus and Trophimus, from Asia. These, however, had gone on and were waiting for us at Troas. So after the Passover, we set sail from Philippi and five days later joined them at Troas where we remained a week.

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[COMMENTARY]

of Asia Minor. Luke names the strong bodyguard who traveled with him, and thus we get another glimpse at the personnel of his supporters. From the Epistles it is clear that these men also served as bearers and trustees of large funds which Paul had been collecting to take up to Jerusalem. As no names are given from Corinth, that committee may have gone on by ship as intended. There were men of Beroëa, Thessalonica, Philippi, and Galatia, making with Paul a company of seven, while two more of

## [COMMENTARY]

Province Asia were to join them at Troas. He spends Passover doubtless very happily at Philippi and then begins a voyage of contrary winds and a series of altogether trying leavetakings that tested his utmost courage to the very end.

**Paragraph 2. THE WEEK IN TROAS. Verses 7-12.**

One episode only of a week in Troas is given. It is the first day of the week at evening. The party, now nine, are to leave at day-break. The Feast of Love is spread in a large upper room, opening on the inner court of some wealthy patron's house. The assembled disciples partake and, after a brief intermission, give attention to Paul, who begins one of his discourses of mingled reminiscence, exhortation, and appeal which continued until past midnight. It is early summer. The room is crowded. The lamps placed all about help vitiate the night air. The windows were wide open and most of them occupied, one by Eutychus, a youth who finally fell into a doze, then yielded to the demand for sleep. Those near him are not disturbed and do not notice his gradual relaxation until, sinking down completely, he loses his balance and falls to the flags below. Of course his friends reached him first, and they and Luke, who also goes down, quickly decide him dead. But Paul is not far behind and soon restores him to his mother, quite probably rescuing him from actual death. Dr. Luke rarely diagnoses a case incorrectly. The meeting proceeds. Now the Eucharistic loaf and cup are brought out and the Lord's Supper celebrated with great joy. Soon, if not in connection with it, a substantial meal is laid, for Paul's eight traveling companions must go to the wharf by the time the first breeze is astir, and Paul keeps the entire company interested until that moment. Only one fell asleep that night out of a hundred, and he was on hand with his parents when all moved to the pier.

**Paragraph 3. THE VOYAGE TO MILETUS. Verses 13-16.**

Paul did not go on board, having no desire to round Cape Lectum under any likely stress of weather, and desiring a quiet talk and walk across the plain and behind the promontory between Troas and Assos. The language implies that he reached that town before the vessel and was rowed out and taken on board without any stop of the ship until they reached Mitylene, the chief port of Lesbos,

## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 2. THE WEEK IN TROAS. Verses 7-12.**

On the first day of the week when we had assembled to break bread, Paul, intending to leave the next day, began to preach and continued his discourse until midnight. Now, there were quite a number of lamps in the upper room where we met, and in the window was sitting a young man by the name of Eutychus, and as Paul kept talking still longer, he was gradually overcome by sleep and finally having succumbed, fell from the third story and was taken up dead. Paul, however, went downstairs, threw himself upon him and, taking him up in his arms, said,

“Do not be disturbed, his life is still in him.”

So he went upstairs again, broke the bread and ate and when he had talked with them a good deal longer until daybreak, he left them. The lad meanwhile they had taken home alive, and were comforted beyond measure.

**Paragraph 3. THE VOYAGE TO MILETUS. Verses 13-16.**

The rest of the company had gone on to the ship beforehand, and we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there; he had himself so arranged it, desiring to cross to Assos afoot. So when he met us at Assos we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. Sailing from there, on the following day we arrived off Chios. The next day we crossed over to Samos and on the following reached Miletus. For Paul had planned to sail past Ephesus so as not to spend much time in Province Asia, since he was very anxious to reach Jerusalem if he could by the day of Pentecost.

## [COMMENTARY]

where some of them went ashore. The next run was to Chios, where they lay to again. Then Samos, where they did not go ashore, preferring, according to an old reading, to cross the strait to Trogyllum. There they landed, possibly leaving the ship for one sailing directly to Miletus, not wishing to take the additional two or three days to run into Ephesus. Paul sends word ahead meantime to that city and asks his elders and particular friends to come down and meet them at Miletus while the coaster was changing cargo; having been prevented from reaching Jerusalem for Passover, he was determined that nothing should balk his spending Pentecost there, and he well knew that sailing on the Mediterranean sometimes demands considerable margin. Ephesus too could not well be visited and any justice done its demands under a week at least.

**Paragraph 4. THE FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE ELDERS  
FROM EPHESUS. Verses 17-38.**

There is a depth of pathos and a quaint flavor of unabashed self-disclosure interwoven with the deepest lessons of true wisdom and Christian prudence in this address which eludes analysis. It must have taken place just as Luke records it, or he, and certainly no other writer, would scarcely have put such a type of speech into Paul's mouth. Luke was possibly not with Paul during these two and more years in Ephesus, and his account of that period may have failed properly to prepare us for its somber side. By reading the letters to the Corinthians freshly, we find how truly they fill in the background of this general review of the Ephesian experiences. Again, there is a uniqueness about the situation which has not before occurred, for Paul is only beginning to receive that long-continued series of warnings of impending trials at Jerusalem. By the time he has arrived there his spirits are again recovered and nothing can by any means move him. We must remember the sort of tenacity with which Paul held on to a project he once fully set his heart upon, and it is clear that for a long time he has had a fixed purpose to visit Rome, and go on to Spain. Now as he completes his plans to go to Jerusalem clouds of ominous blackness fill the Eastern sky. He no doubt dwells on his own unselfish services to one and all in every condition and under every limitation in order to impress more indelibly the minds of the elders or responsible leaders of the great field of Asia with the absolute necessity of walking and working by the same rule. His words, his

## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 4. THE FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE ELDERS  
FROM EPHESUS. Verses 17-38.**

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. When they arrived he addressed them.

“You well understand from the very first day of my setting foot in Province Asia how all the time I was serving the Lord in all humility amid tears and temptations which came upon me by the plots of the Jews, how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable or teaching you both in public and from house to house, solemnly urging both upon Jews and Greeks repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, as you see, constrained by the Spirit, I am starting for Jerusalem. What is going to happen to me there I do not know, except that the Holy Spirit from city to city keeps impressing upon me deeply that imprisonment and trouble are waiting for me. But I set no value on my own life as of any consequence if only I may complete my allotted course and the service which the Lord Jesus assigned me of testifying without stint to the gospel of the grace of God. And now I know that no longer will any of you see my face, you among whom I have gone in and out preaching the Kingdom. Therefore, I bear you witness this very day that I am not responsible for the loss of any one of you. For I did not shrink from proclaiming to you all of God’s purpose. Take heed to yourselves and to the entire flock among which the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the Church of God which He has bought with His own blood. I know that after I am gone fierce



## [COMMENTARY]

spirit, his deep anxiety for the future of the church and the truest success of his disciples parallel so perfectly the words, spirit, and mind of Jesus on the night before His betrayal that we see no longer Paul but the Master himself. Paul's quotation of Jesus' saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," illuminates and lifts his address, as it does his whole life, into a plane of the first rank. With fervent prayers and affectionate salutations the travelers embark and the local brethren go back to their homes. Respecting Paul's remark as to their "no longer" seeing his face, as the Greek reads in both verses 25 and 38, not "never again," it were well for us to take it, in the light of the whole occasion, as expressed by Dr. Rendell: ". . . the real statement of the Apostle is that he was to remain no longer in these regions of Greece and Asia Minor, where he had spent the greater part of his last ten years." It must be acknowledged that there is no convincing proof of Paul's ever paying another visit either to Miletus or Ephesus. Even tradition connects his later labors in those parts with other cities.

## [TRANSLATION]

wolves will get in among you who will not spare the flock. Even men from your own number will rise up who will seek by their corrupt teachings to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, guard yourselves and remember that for three years I never ceased night nor day to warn every one of you with tears. And now, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, to the One able to build you up and to give you your inheritance among the Holy Ones. I have never coveted any-one's silver or gold or clothing. You know yourselves that these hands of mine have provided for my own necessities and for those with me. In everything I set you an example, how that by working just as I do you ought to assist those who are weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

When he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all, and with an outburst of weeping they all fell on Paul's neck and lovingly kissed him, distressed chiefly because of his telling them that they would no longer look on his face. Then they went with him to the boat.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE RETURN AND REPORT TO THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

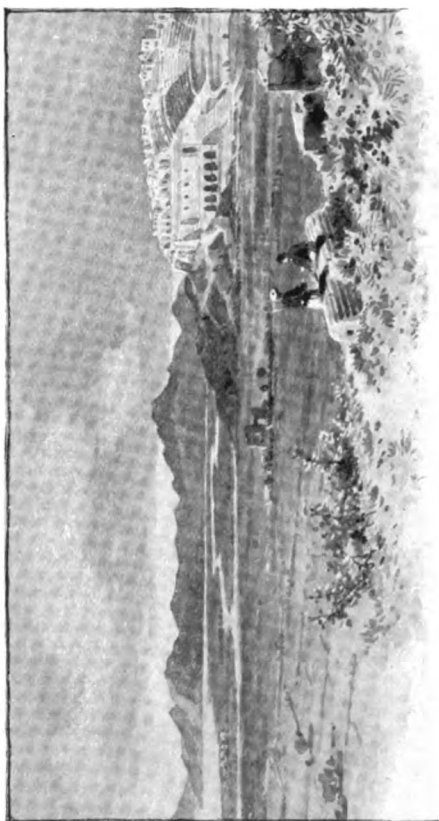
[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE VOYAGE FROM MILETUS TO PTOLEMAIS. Verses 1-7.**

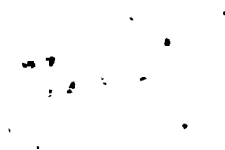
At last Paul is off for his final visit to Jerusalem. 'The northwest wind drives his ship straight to her first port of call on the island of Cos, off the Carian coast. The next day they make Rhodes, a larger island but not more notable. Then they run into the Lycian harbor of Patara on the mainland, where they transship to a larger vessel going straight to Tyre. That port is made without delay, their course lying south of Cyprus; here the ship takes a week to unload and take on her cargo. Paul and his friends search the city and finally discover one of those hundred and more churches which had already sprung up in every corner of the empire. Here again it was deeply felt that Paul's purpose in going to Jerusalem would not be appreciated nor his gifts allay antagonism, and that therefore he ought not to go. To Paul's mind this was only the greater reason for persistence, and when the ship runs on down to her last port, Ptolemais, the company from the Ægean cities is on board. The pretty scene of the parting on the seashore outside the walls of Tyre as hosts and guests pledge mutual love in fervent prayers and farewells is another of those artistic yet homely touches so characteristic of Luke. At Ptolemais they spend a day with a like group and thence take the land route along the shore to Cæsarea.

#### **Paragraph 2. THE VISIT TO THE CHURCH IN CÆSAREA. Verses 8-16.**

They reach the capital of Palestine in good season, and, having a margin to spare before the feast, they spend it in pleasant intercourse with the church and brethren there. Philip, the first



RUINS OF MILETUS



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE RETURN AND REPORT TO THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE VOYAGE FROM MILETUS TO PTOLEMAIS. Verses 1-7.**

Now, when we had torn ourselves away from them and set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara. There we found a vessel bound for Phœnicia, went on board and set sail. After we sighted Cyprus we passed it on the left and sailed on to Syria and so landed at Tyre, for there the boat was to discharge her cargo. After we had found the disciples we stayed a week there. Taught by the Spirit, they kept telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up we left and continued our journey, all accompanying us outside the walls with their wives and children. Then we kneeled down on the beach, offered prayer, bade each other good-by, and embarked while they went back home. We, however, with the run from Tyre to Ptolemais completed our voyage; there also we greeted the brothers and stayed over with them one day.

**Paragraph 2. THE VISIT TO THE CHURCH IN CÆSAREA. Verses 8-16.**

The next morning we left and proceeded to Cæsarea where we went to the house of Philip, the Evangelist, one of the seven deacons, and we stayed with him. Philip had four unmarried daughters—prophetesses. As we

## [COMMENTARY]

Evangelist who went to people outside of Judæa and of the Jewish pale, opens his home to welcome the great Apostle to the Græco-Latin World, and they have converse to mutual edification. Philip's four unmarried daughters have shared in the spirit and work of their father and also exercised the gift of Pentecost—"your daughters shall prophesy." While Paul remains there a prophet, Agabus, possibly he of the episode at Antioch, narrated in Chapter XI, comes down from Jerusalem and adds the final page to this chapter of predictions as to Paul's immediate future. He well knew the sentiment of the majority in Jerusalem, as to this new Way, and Paul's preaching and practice concerning it, and he predicted trouble. After the fashion of the Old Testament prophets, Agabus illustrates his meaning by a symbolic act. To cavil, as some have done, complaining that the prediction was not fulfilled is futile. That Paul was bound hand and foot in Jerusalem as far as exerting any freedom or influence such as he had vainly longed for ever since his return from Damascus, is manifest enough. Even Luke and the others from Asia seem to have joined the friends in Cæsarea in making this last plea for Paul not to venture to go up to the Holy City. This only fixes his purpose the more firmly, but it also nearly breaks his heart. With their usual courtesy, the local disciples provide well for the comfort of the Apostle, since they cannot bend his will, and thus they go on with him to Jerusalem and conduct him to the pleasant home there of Mnason, from Cyprus.

**Paragraph 3. THE ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION AT JERUSALEM. Verses 17-26.**

Luke's method of employing the first person without any consistency is illustrated in the scenes now narrated. He was no doubt closer in every way to Paul and more constantly by his side than any of his friends, but from the moment he goes into audience with James until they start over two years later from Cæsarea to Rome he does not again disclose his presence. Paul's considerable party of representative and very intelligent men, all well conditioned and nearly all Greeks or Greek proselytes, made a favorable impression as they were received by the Apostles and others. Each in turn made a presentation speech as he went forward with the gift of the churches which had sent their token of love by his hands, the aggregate making up a sum never

## [TRANSLATION]

remained there for some days a prophet named Agabus came down from Judæa. When he met us he took Paul's girdle and bound his own feet and hands with it.

"Thus," he said, "speaks the Holy Spirit, 'The Jews will bind the man who owns this girdle in Jerusalem just like this and they will hand him over to the Gentiles.' " When we heard this, we kept appealing to Paul, and so did the local brothers, not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered back:

"What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am not only ready to be bound but even to die at Jerusalem for the sake of the Lord Jesus."

As he would not be persuaded, we desisted, saying,

"The Lord's will be done." After these days we made preparations and began our journey to Jerusalem. There went along with us some of the disciples from Cæsarea who brought us to Mnason, a native of Cyprus, one of the early disciples, with whom we were to stay.

**Paragraph 3. THE ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION AT JERUSALEM. Verses 17-26.**

On our reaching Jerusalem the brothers cordially welcomed us. On the day following we went with Paul to see James; moreover, all the elders were present. When Paul had saluted them he began to describe from first to last what God had done through his ministry among the Gentiles. After they heard it they began to glorify God and said to him:

"Brother, you see how many tens of thousands there are among the Jews of those who have come to believe; moreover, all of them are zealous upholders of the law. Now, they have been informed about you that you are



## [COMMENTARY]

before nor afterward poured into the coffers of the Christian Church at Jerusalem. Paul's report was, however, the chief feature, and, although Luke gives but slight reference to it, the assembly saw thereby how genuine must be the faith that bore such fruits as Paul and his commission laid before them. No doubt the inner apostolic group would have been content with the showing which Paul's detailed account of the triumph of these three long and hazardous tours, covering a period of eight years, from Antioch clear around to Illyricum on the Adriatic, presented to them. But some present and outward sign and proof that he was truly scrupulous in keeping himself and teaching the other Jews to keep the strict Mosaic Laws was felt to be needful, not so much for them but to disabuse the minds of those who accepted the persistent rumors that he had been teaching and encouraging Jews and Jewish proselytes all over Asia and Greece to repudiate circumcision and other customs and legal observances almost equally sacred. For there were tens of thousands of Jews already believing in Christ whose faith was being jeopardized by such reports, and it must be remembered that Christ was a Jew and the Scriptures were Hebrew writings and the great hope of the world was in the redemption of the chosen people. Then came the plan, utterly simple and completely feasible and withal conciliatory, but like all such makeshifts, only a subterfuge of no permanent value. However, Paul meets it in the noblest Christian spirit. He assumes the expense involved, not small in money nor in precious time, nor least in its tax on his mental and spiritual sense of values.

**Paragraph 4. THE ATTEMPT BY THE MOB TO LYNCH  
PAUL. Verses 27-36.**

The week of patient waiting in the court of the Nazarites is nearly ended. And although Paul has inwardly chafed at this restriction upon his one last opportunity to preach the gospel openly in Jerusalem—a privilege he has sought for years and which he has never been granted—he has learned in patience to wait. He has also learned during these days more of the hollowness and emptiness and futility of the whole rigmarole of ceremonialism as then conducted within the precincts of the Temple, and this was well worth a week. It is probably the last day, and Paul has arisen with a great sense of relief, hoping soon to be again out in the great free world of the west. Even the incense of the endless

## [TRANSLATION]

teaching all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children nor to live after the old customs. What, then, is to be done? They will surely hear that you have arrived. So, then, do this which we suggest to you. We have four men here who have taken a vow. Join these men and purify yourself with them; moreover, pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads. Then, every-one will understand that there is nothing in what they have been told about you but that you conduct yourself, on the other hand, strictly according to the law. As for Gentiles who have believed, we issued our injunction that they guard against anything offered to an idol, from blood, from things strangled, and fornication."

Thereupon, Paul joined the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, he went into the Temple publishing widely the time when the days of purification would be done, namely, the time when the sacrifice could be offered for each one of them.

**Paragraph 4. THE ATTEMPT BY THE MOB TO LYNCH PAUL. Verses 27-36.**

Now, as the seven days were nearly done, the Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple and began to arouse all the people. They laid hands on him and kept shouting:

"Men of Israel, give us your help. This is the man who is teaching every-one everywhere against the people and the law of this place. Moreover, he has even gone so far as to bring Greeks into the Temple proper and has made the Holy Place unclean." For they had before

## [COMMENTARY]

sacrifices and the shuffling of the perfunctory priests, and especially the crafty, calculating face and manner of the treasury's deputy, whom he had to deal with in settling for the bullocks to be slaughtered for his four Nazarite companions, irk him. He knows not, however, what the day will bring forth. Those sleepless Jewish fanatics from Asia and Corinth are not to be robbed of their revenge. They have at last concocted a plot which, if sprung just at the right moment and with an air of unctuous spontaneity, promises success and a quick lynching. To us the ridiculous side creeps in and makes it seem unthinkable, but not an actor in that comedy of errors in Herod's Temple that day saw anything other than its tragic side. One of the chief elements in the entire performance on Paul's part was to be its publicity feature, as widely advertising as possible his punctilious regard for the "laws of Moses," the "sanctity of the Temple," and the "customs of our people." With a single blow every one of these pretended claims is dashed to the ground. Not only are the rumors true that Paul has constantly preached to a contrary end, but for seven days he has practiced in the upper precinct their utmost profanation.

"Did not one Trophimus of Ephesus, a well-known Greek, not even a pretended proselyte, accompany Paul to this city?"

"Who has seen him since?"

"He is, of course, with Paul, who has taken him across this outer court, up those fifteen steps, through that narrow door, past those deeply incised warnings, and for seven days passed him off as a Jew and now will bring him out and forever both will boast that they have broken Moses' law and the Temple law and the law of sacred customs right here in Jerusalem and not a stroke of vengeance has fallen! There they come now! See those five men? That's Paul in front! He is a Jew, that's clear enough! What joy if we can but get him this day! Do you see that third man? He's Trophimus! Nobody can deny it! Of course—his head is shaved to the scalp; nobody can deny that's a Greek, and one of the others looks like a Greek! Now, when they reach the door just at the top of the stairs I will run up and yell. Are you all ready? Help, ho! Men of Israel, come this way to the rescue; That's Paul, the pretender! He has broken that law cut in stone right over his head! He has brought that Greek, that man right there, into the upper courts. Seize him! Drag him down! Kill him! Get him out! Shut the doors! We'll finish him!"

## [TRANSLATION]

that seen Trophimus, the Ephesian, with Paul in the city, and thought Paul had brought him into the Temple. The whole city was in an uproar and a mob began to gather. They seized Paul and began to drag him outside of the Temple, and at once the doors were shut. They were trying to kill him when report reached the Commander of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. At once he took along troops and centurions and ran down upon them. When they saw the Commander and his troops they stopped beating Paul. Upon that the Commander went up and seized him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He then began to ask,

“Who is he?” and “What has he been doing?”

Some of the crowd shouted one thing and some another. So when he could not learn the facts because of the din he ordered that he should be brought into the castle. When, however, he reached the steps Paul was actually being carried by the soldiers, owing to the fury of the crowd, for the mass of the people was following, crying out,

“Away with him!”

**Paragraph 5. PAUL PROTECTED BY THE COMMANDER OF THE CASTLE. Verses 37-40.**

About to be led into the castle, Paul said to the Commander,

“May I have a word with you?”

The Commander replied:

“Do you know Greek? Are you not, then, the Egyptian who some time ago raised to revolt the four thousand assassins and led them out into the desert?”

## [COMMENTARY]

But the eye of the Roman Eagle was also sleepless. And the angel of Jehovah was very near. The lookout on the tower of Antonia sees the concourse, hears the clamor, calls the guard, and Lysias, the Tribune, or Commander, of the cohort, with two centurions or captains and their men, glide as by magic into the center of the scene. Paul is put into custody, chained and dragged toward the castle. The Commander can get no notion of the situation; the maddened mob have but one cry—"Away from the earth with such a man!"

**Paragraph 5. PAUL PROTECTED BY THE COMMANDER OF  
THE CASTLE. Verses 37-40.**

By this time Paul sees through the plot and his imperial wits are at work. He now sees his great opportunity has come. He can clear himself of course. Innocence only has to be given the chance to show itself and it will be acknowledged by all fairminded men. As for others, he is not concerned. He must get the true state of things before the people and then preach Jesus to them. This is his chance. To the Greek he is a Greek, and arrests the Greek.

## [TRANSLATION]

"I am a Jew," said Paul, "native of Tarsus in Cilicia, citizen of no mean city, and I beg you give me leave to speak to the people."

When he had given him leave Paul stood there on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. When a great silence fell on them he spoke to them in Hebrew.

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## [COMMENTARY]

"What, you speak Greek then?" says the commander. "I thought I had the Egyptian assassin we are all after."

"I am a Jew of Cilicia, of the capital city, Tarsus, well enough known, but let me speak to the people; they also think me some assassin. It is all a mistake; I can quiet them. There ought to be no uproar here like this and on a feast day—I can explain it all in a moment—let me speak right here."

The commander willingly consents. Paul raises his manacled hand and at once all is quiet.

## CHAPTER XXII

### PAUL'S ADDRESS FROM THE CASTLE STAIRS

#### [COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE SKETCH OF HIS LIFE BEFORE CONVERSION. Verses 1-5.**

To the Jews Paul is a Jew. He begins with the Jewish salutation of the synagogue speaker. He uses the musical Aramaic or Yiddish language of the land. He emphasizes his Jewish parentage and careful education right there in Gamaliel's lecture hall. He claims strictest respect for the observance of the Levitical law during all his early life, and was so zealous that he became chief persecutor against heretic Nazarenes. The records of the Sanhedrin would show it. Possibly some present remember the case of Stephen, whose stoning he himself had stood sponsor for. Thus it went until he left with warrants from the Sanhedrin for the arrest of Nazarene refugees as far north as Damascus. He was accompanied by a sufficient force to bring them back in chains to Jerusalem for trial. The cavalcade had rapidly crossed the country, had rounded the shoulders of Hermon, and they were within sight of their journey's end.

#### **Paragraph 2. THE STORY OF HIS COMPLETE CHANGE. Verses 6-16.**

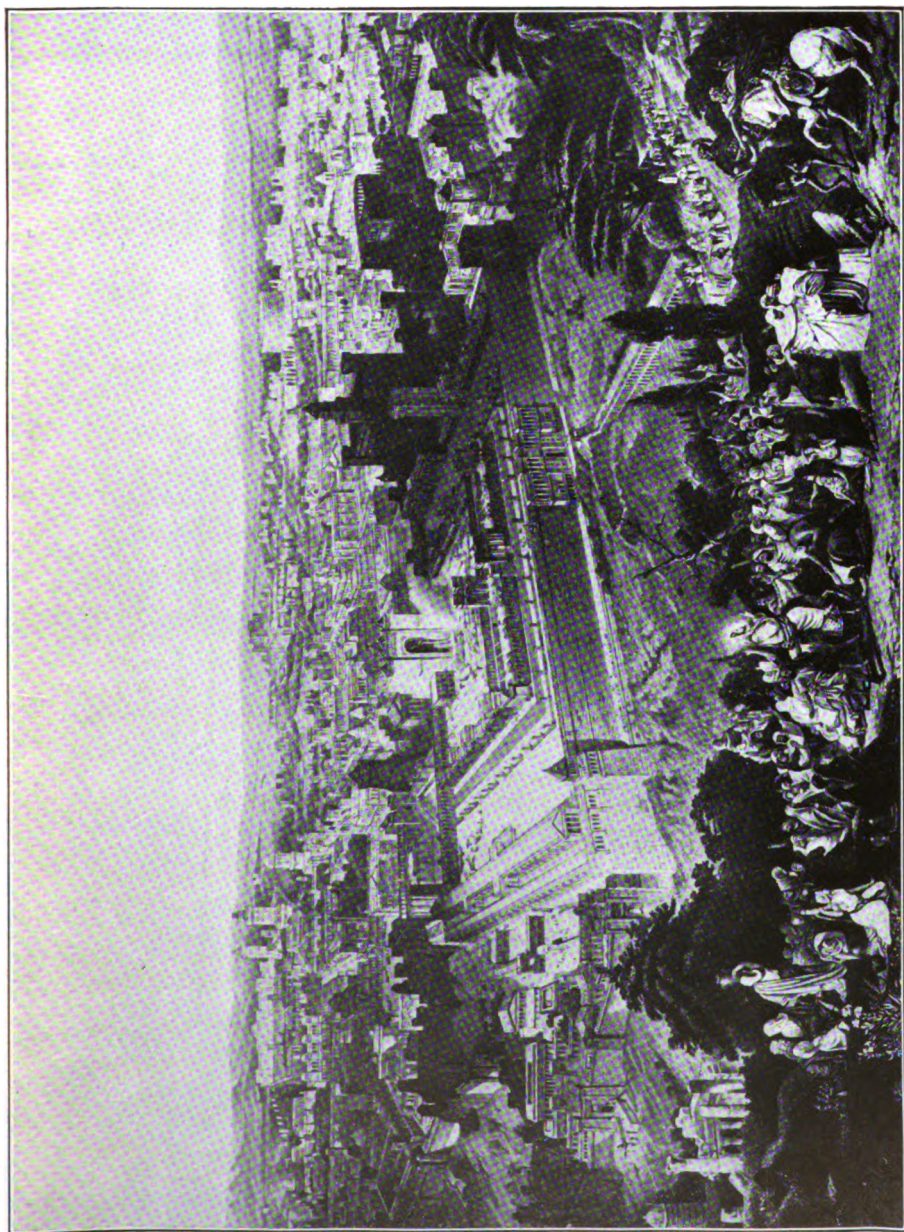
Suddenly out of the sky at high noon a flash of blinding brightness, like a bolt of lightning, felled him to the earth. But though he could see nothing about him, his inner senses were quickened a thousandfold. He saw the Heavens open, and Jesus, as he learned, at the right hand of power, and full of grief mingled with wrath he heard Him say,

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

"Of course I was humiliated and instantly penitent, and cried out in my inmost soul,

"What shall I do, Lord?"

"You are appointed to be henceforth my slave, as it were, among men. Your zeal must be given without stint to the Nazarene as



JERUSALEM IN HER GLORY—JUST BEFORE HER FALL





## CHAPTER XXII

### PAUL'S ADDRESS FROM THE CASTLE STAIRS

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE SKETCH OF HIS LIFE BEFORE CONVERSION. Verses 1-5.**

"Brother men and fathers," he said, "listen to my defense, which I am about to make before you."

When they heard that he was calling to them in Hebrew they were all the more quiet; so he said:

"I am a Jew, born at Tarsus, in Cilicia, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel in this very city, educated in the strict manner of the law of our fathers, zealous for God just as you all are to-day. In addition, I persecuted this Way to the death, chaining and throwing into prison both men and women, as also the High Priest and all the Council can bear witness. Moreover, it was from them I received letters to their brothers in Damascus, and was on my way, intending to bring back those who were there in chains to Jerusalem for punishment.

**Paragraph 2. THE STORY OF HIS COMPLETE CHANGE. Verses 6-16.**

"Thus as I made my journey, and was nearing Damascus, about high noon there suddenly broke from the sky a flash of great light all about me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me:

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" I answered.

## [COMMENTARY]

they call me; I am the Sovereign King. Go into Damascus and there await further orders.'

"Now those about me noticed the unusual light, but only I was struck blind, and I only had that glorious vision and heard that heavenly voice. They led me into the city, and there the chief man I had gone to arrest came and restored me my sight and gave me the orders I had been told should come. He well knew my purpose in coming to their city, but he also knew that I had surrendered all to my new Master and his. He confirmed my story that I had heard the very voice of Jesus and had seen His face, and that I should give my life henceforth to telling everywhere what I had seen and heard. That interview ended in my glad baptism into the name of my new Sovereign and Lord."

**Paragraph 3. THE ACCOUNT OF HIS HEAVENLY COMMISSION. Verses 17-21.**

"On my return to Jerusalem—here in this very Temple—I was praying in the Court of the Men of Israel when in a trance I saw Jesus again. He was very peremptory, though He seemed to sympathize with my desire to atone right here for the havoc I had wrought and undo as far as I could the harm to His cause. I pleaded with Him, especially in view of my crime against Stephen, but He would not consent and said that my field was not to be here, that here my testimony would only stir up greater opposition than before and thus prove an embarrassment rather than a help. Finally He said,

"'Make haste and depart. Your place of future witness and labor I cannot allow to be among the chosen people; you must give yourself to labor among the Gentiles.'"

**Paragraph 4. THE FANATICAL OUTBREAK OF THE MOB. Verses 22-24.**

That Paul had succeeded in keeping control of the mob so far is no small proof of his powers. But it must not be thought that all of his audience was spellbound. Here and there fierce-eyed men move about whispering together and planning another outbreak and at the thing which seemed to Paul so humiliating, namely, his being sent away from his beloved people and city, they break loose. Not that they had any concern whether he gave his talents to the

## [TRANSLATION]

"He said to me, 'I am Jesus, the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'

"Those with me observed the light but they did not hear the voice of Him who was talking to me. Then I asked,

" 'What shall I do, Lord?'

"And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go into Damascus and there you will be told about everything you are appointed to do.' Then, since I could not see because of the glory of that light, those who were with me took me by the hand and thus I entered Damascus. Thereupon a certain Ananias, a man strictly obedient to the law, who was highly reputed among all the resident Jews, came to me and standing before me said,

" 'Saul, my brother, you can see again.'

"At once I regained sight and looked up at him. He then said:

" 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to understand His will and to see the Righteous One and hear Him speak with His own lips. For you shall be a witness for Him before all men, of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting? Get up and be baptized and wash away your sin, calling upon His name.' "

**Paragraph 3. THE ACCOUNT OF HIS HEAVENLY COMMISSION. Verses 17-21.**

"Now, when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying once in the Temple I fell into a trance and saw Him, and He said to me,

" 'Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'

## [COMMENTARY]

Gentiles or not, but that his egotism implying such concern gave them a chance to jeer and so break his hold for an instant. The concerted outburst and renewed rush for the foot of the stairs on which he stood accomplished its end. The mob became conscious that its dignity was being abused, not alone by what Paul was saying, but because he in chains there was mastering their intention. The reaction is greater than could have been expected. Stark frenzy seizes them all. They leap up and down, toss up their cloaks and headgear, gnash their teeth in rage, fling pebbles and dust and bits of brick about, wave their bare arms in wild helplessness, all the while shouting at the top of their lungs: "Away with him! Kill him! Silence him! Unfit to live—to Gehenna he should go! Strangle him! Stone him!"

**Paragraph 5. PAUL'S STAND ON HIS ROMAN CITIZENSHIP. Verses 25-30.**

Again the mystified Tribune turns upon his captive.

"Bring him inside!" Then turning to a centurion, "Order the lash. See if you can get anything out of him by torture."

Paul is stretched roughly out upon the beam and bound fast by tough bullhide thongs. The officer stands by to see the job well done.

"Does the law allow a Roman citizen to be scourged before examination or judgment?" asked Paul.

Paul knows his ground. The effect is immediate. The subordinate almost seems to enjoy the discomfiture of his chief as he says,

"Do you order us to scourge Roman citizens nowadays?"

For answer the Tribune walks rapidly across to where Paul is stretched prone for his flogging.

"Tell me, sir, is this man right? Are you a Roman?"

"Yes," says Paul.

That one word brought him respect, protection, years of life, not once nor twice. The scourgers dropped their tools of torture, unbound their victim, not roughly now, and as they retired heard their Commander say,

"Do you know that my citizenship cost me a great deal of good gold?"

"No doubt," replied Paul, "but my citizenship is part of my native heritage."

[TRANSLATION]

“‘But, Lord,’ I replied, ‘they themselves know very well how I used to imprison and to beat in all the synagogues those who were believers in You, and when they were pouring out the blood of Your martyr, Stephen, I myself was standing by, approving of it and taking charge of the clothes of those slaying him.’

“‘But He said to me,

“‘Go forth, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

**Paragraph 4. THE FANATICAL OUTBREAK OF THE MOB. Verses 22-24.**

They had listened to him up to that last utterance and then, with a shout, they burst forth:

“‘Away with such a person from the earth! He is not fit to live!’”

So while they kept crying out and tearing off their clothing and throwing dust into the air the Commander ordered him to be brought into the castle and directed him to be examined by scourging, in order that he might find out the reason why they cried out so against him.

**Paragraph 5. PAUL’S STAND ON HIS ROMAN CITIZENSHIP. Verses 25-30.**

They had tied him up with thongs when Paul spoke to the centurion standing by:

“‘Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman citizen—one uncondemned at that?’”

When he heard this the centurion went and reported it to the Commander.

“‘What are you going to do?’” he said. “‘This man is a Roman citizen.’”

## [COMMENTARY]

That night the Tribune determined to go more deeply into the case, and Paul had a friend at court.

A quick order is issued for the chief Jewish leaders to meet him next day for an examination and inquiry into the meaning of the uproar.

WARNING IN GREEK ON THE TEMPLE  
WALL WHICH PAUL WAS CHARGED  
WITH BREAKING

ΜΗΘΕΝΑΑΛΛΟΓΕΝΗΕΣΠΟ  
ΡΕΥΕΣΘΑΙΕΝΤΟΣΤΟΥΠΕ  
ΡΙΤΟΙΕΡΟΝΤΡΥΦΑΚΤΟΥΚΑΙ  
ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΥΟΣΔΑΝΛΗ  
ΦΘΗΕΑΥΤΩΙΑΙΤΙΟΣΕΣ  
ΤΑΙΔΙΑΤΟΕΞΑΚΟΛΟΥ  
ΘΕΙΝΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ

"No foreigner may pass this balustrade and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whosoever is caught so doing will alone be responsible for the death which overtakes him."

## [TRANSLATION]

So the Commander came up to Paul and said,

"Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

"Yes," he said.

"I had to pay a large sum," replied the Commander, "for this citizenship."

"But I was born a Roman," said Paul.

Immediately then the men who were about to examine him went off, and even the Commander was afraid when he understood that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him. The day following, as he wished to know exactly why Paul had been accused by the Jews, the Commander unbound him, ordered the High Priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble, and brought Paul down and placed him before them.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE SANHEDRIN AND ITS SEQUEL

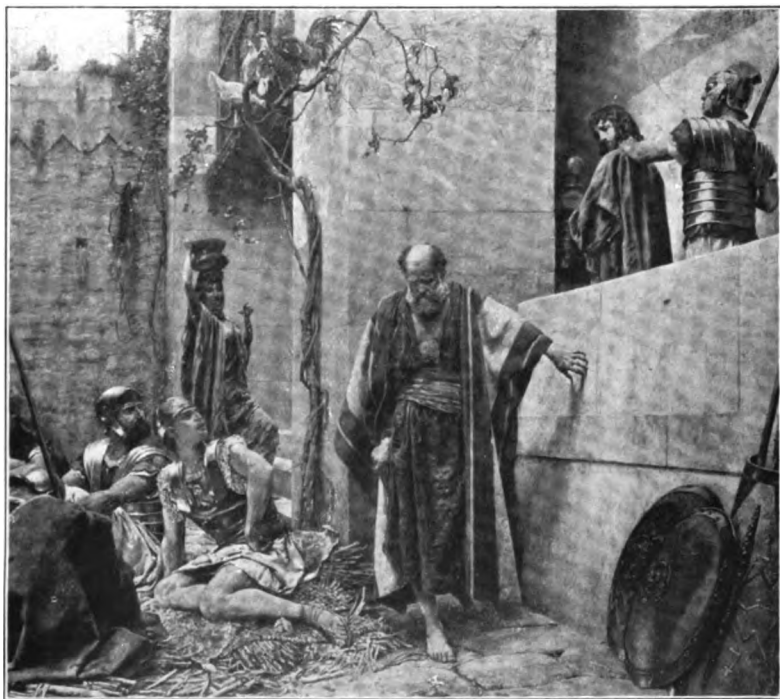
[COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. HIS EMPHASIS OF THE RESURRECTION DIVIDES THE ASSEMBLY. Verses 1-10.

It is quite probable that the gathering spoken of in this chapter was not a regular meeting of the Sanhedrin with the High Priest as president, but that the Tribune Lysias was in the chair, with his own deputies at the secretary's desk. Nevertheless, the body of the assembly was the Sanhedrin, and to it Paul spoke. Paul's fixed gaze is frequently mentioned by Luke as peculiarly penetrating, if not irritating, to his enemies, and either because he singled out the High Priest unconsciously, and steadily addressed his opening remark, as if it were personal, to him, or because of its tone, or because his insistence upon the integrity of his course rather as "citizen" than as "Hebrew" threatened to sidestep the entire issue, it threw Ananias into a towering passion. He made an effort to rise, angrily shouting,

"Strike that man down! Silence him!"

It is so unexpected a blow that for an instant Paul is unhorsed and answers in kind. Still, his words remind us so strongly of the Saviour's concerning hypocrites that when Paul adds a quiet apology we at once forgive him. Dr. Ramsay thinks that Luke was not present at this hearing and only gives the briefest sketch of Paul's speech, getting his points directly from Paul. Thus the apparent abruptness of his next move in dividing the assembly is explained by his only telling the end and not the process which led thereto. After such a violent outbreak at the beginning on the part of the High Priest himself it must have been clear that no favor would be given him in any case, and so Paul's wits worked unerringly again at once to the confusion of his enemies, the pressing and proclaiming of the main issue, Christ's resurrection, and the saving of his own neck. Though Ananias and his intimates are Sadducees, the majority are Pharisees, and their scribes, who have not been recognized at all by the Tribune, leap into prominence, bring forth their scrolls, and begin to quote chapter and verse in proof of the



PETER DENIES HIS LORD



## CHAPTER XXIII

### PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE SANHEDRIN AND ITS SEQUEL

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1.** HIS EMPHASIS OF THE RESURRECTION DIVIDES THE ASSEMBLY. Verses 1-10.

Then Paul, with his gaze fixed on the Sanhedrin, said:

"Brother men, I have lived with an utterly clear conscience before God to the present day."

Then Ananias, the High Priest, ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth.

Upon that Paul said to him:

"God is about to strike you, you white-washed wall! And do you sit there to judge me according to the law, while contrary to the law you order me to be struck?"

"Do you mean to revile the High Priest of God?" exclaimed the bystanders.

"I did not know, brothers," replied Paul, "that he was the High Priest; for it is written, 'THOU SHALT NOT SPEAK EVIL OF A RULER OF THY PEOPLE'" (Exod. xxii, 28).

When, however, Paul recognized that part of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees and the other part Pharisees, he called out among them:

"Brother men, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is for the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am being tried."

When he said this, dissension broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the assembly was divided, for Sadducees claim there is no resurrection nor angel nor spirit; Pharisees, however, believe in both.

## [COMMENTARY]

life after death, angels, spirits, and the like, shouting in Paul's defense that an angel or spirit might well have appeared to him, and that in their rejection of his testimony to such things they had best beware lest they be found contending against God. The Tribune again sees these religious bigots falling into confusion worse confounded and abruptly ends the hearing. This is now the third time that he has been compelled within the span of a single day to break up a religious assembly in the courts of Jehovah's Temple and to rescue from death one of Jehovah's prophets.

**Paragraph 2. A RENEWED ATTEMPT TO LYNCH PAUL.**  
Verses 11-15.

Paul is granted a visit from his King that night as his troubled spirit reviews in its perplexity the doings of the last three days. "The Lord stood by Paul." He finds him sleeping, or praying more probably, in Antonia. He gives him encouragement, especially on the point of his steadfastness in testifying to his Master in Jerusalem where his work is now ending, and on the further point, which needs some clearing, as to his destiny respecting Rome. Paul then sleeps long and late and gets much needed rest for the exciting scenes to follow. The developments follow fast. Forty assassins were plotting Paul's death while he leisurely breakfasted and received Luke and Trophimus in the castle. The conspirators were good Jews of the Judas Iscariot type and were received in close conference at the High Priest's palace and given a last hearty meal at the expense of Jehovah's treasury. They pledged one another too frequently, as the oath was taken that this would be the last drink till they had spilled Paul's blood, and then some one or more of them went out and indiscreetly asked some of his friends to the killing. It was to take place, they hoped, at the latest the following morning when Paul was on his way down to a final hearing, not yet arranged for, to be sure, but probably at the court of the High Priest Ananias. When some one asked how they expected to overcome the Roman escort they jauntily replied,

"There are forty of us armed to the teeth, and there are others who will be on hand for the rush at the right moment."

**Paragraph 3. COUNTER PLOT OF PAUL'S NEPHEW AND THE COMMANDER.** Verses 16-24.

Paul's family now breaks into the foreground. Blood is thicker

## [TRANSLATION]

Thus a great uproar broke out. Some of the scribes on the side of the Pharisees, leaping up, began a fierce contention:

"We find nothing wrong in this man here. What if a spirit or angel has spoken to him?"

Then the dispute became so violent that the Commander feared the people would tear Paul to pieces, so he ordered the troops to come down and rescue him from them and bring him inside the castle.

**Paragraph 2. A RENEWED ATTEMPT TO LYNCH PAUL.**  
Verses 11-15.

That night the Lord stood by Paul and said,

"Take courage, for as you have bravely testified about me at Jerusalem, so must you testify also in Rome."

When daylight broke, the Jews planned a conspiracy and took oath that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who made this plot. Then they went to the High Priests and elders and said:

"We have taken solemn oath to taste nothing till we have killed Paul. Now, then, you of the Sanhedrin, let the Commander know you want him to bring Paul down to you, as if you were about to investigate his case more carefully, and we are ready to kill him before he gets near here."

**Paragraph 3. COUNTER PLOT OF PAUL'S NEPHEW AND THE COMMANDER.** Verses 16-24.

But Paul's nephew heard of the ambush, so he went over and entered the castle and told Paul, and Paul called one of the centurions and said,

## [COMMENTARY]

than water, and Jewish households are usually not small and rarely disloyal to household interests. Paul's constant reference to his citizenship as a native of Tarsus, during these days of trial, and to his upbringing and like subjects, goes with the views of many moderns that his fortunes had recently changed, that possibly his father had lately died and he as oldest son had come into property. In his recent letter to the Romans there are indications that members of his family were Christians and in good social standing at Rome. Here the reception of Paul's nephew both by prisoner and Commander reflects the same condition, and the fact that at Cæsarea later Paul was so constantly the object of marked attention on the part of the Roman authorities, and especially that the Procurator Felix, a notorious millionaire himself and blood brother of "Pallas, the richest man in Rome," endeavored to inveigle Paul into the purchase of his liberty by money, gives ground for this contention. Paul's family learns of the plot just in time to save him. The story is detailed in full in Luke's inimitable way and nothing can add to its vividness or appeal.

**Paragraph 4. A COPY OF THE DOCUMENT CHANGING VENUE. Verses 25-30.**

This letter of Claudius Lysias is no doubt an exact copy of the original. The word translated "copy" does not signify that Luke has given a reconstruction of it from his imagination, as many think. The contents just as given, judged by psychological tests and internal evidence, accredit it as genuine. Luke's methods, as well as advantages, in obtaining it make also in this direction. The standpoint of the writer is one that none but Lysias would take or set down, and its air of verisimilitude altogether fixes it as his own. This is the first of many documents connected with this notable case, reviewed and repeatedly argued at the seat of government in Cæsarea and finally transferred to the Imperial Courts at Rome and Luke could obtain it without difficulty.

**Paragraph 5. THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND TRANSFER TO CÆSAREA. Verses 31-35.**

One cannot resist the temptation to point to the compliment paid Paul again in the size and equipment of the cavalcade, which aggregated half a thousand well-equipped Roman troops, as they

## [TRANSLATION]

"Take this young man to the Commander, for he has something to tell him."

So he took him along to the Commander and said:

"The prisoner Paul called me to him and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you."

Then the Commander, taking his hand, led him aside and began to ask, "What is it you have to tell me?"

"The Jews," he answered, "have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to-morrow to the Sanhedrin, as if about to inquire more carefully about his case. So, then, do not let them persuade you, for more than forty men of them are lying in wait for him and have taken oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. They are even now ready, anticipating the assurance from you."

Then the Commander let the young man go and cautioned him,

"Tell no one that you have given me these facts."

He summoned two of his centurions and said,

"Get ready two hundred soldiers to proceed to Cæsarea, also seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen by nine o'clock to-night." Provision was also made for Paul's mount to carry him safely to Felix the Governor.

**Paragraph 4. A COPY OF THE DOCUMENT CHANGING VENUE. Verses 25-30.**

He also wrote a letter of which this is a copy.

"Claudius Lysias  
to his Excellency Governor Felix, greeting.

"This man Paul had been seized by the Jews and was on the point of being killed by them when I came upon them with the troops and rescued him, as I had learned



## [COMMENTARY]

rapidly move through the night conveying him from castle Antonia to Antipatris, the outlying garrison town overlooking Casarea, over thirty miles from Jerusalem. From Antipatris the cavalry with Paul trot on, while the foot-soldiers return to their barracks in Antonia. No doubt by nightfall Paul rode with his troopers across the bridge and beneath the portcullis of the east gate of Casarea, to his own great physical relief and the proud satisfaction of the centurion who had him in charge. They ride to the palace of the Procurator and deliver the letter of the Tribune. Felix at once reads it, has Paul brought into his presence, inquires carefully as to his citizenship so as to understand whether he was under North or South Syrian authority, and learning that he is from Cilicia and the city of Tarsus, orders that he be taken to the castle of Herod, remarking, courteously, as they lead Paul away,

"I will take up your case as soon as we can hear from the prosecution and arrange for your examination, sir."

Meanwhile word of his arrival is carried to his friend Philip and others, both to their astonishment and to their great joy when they learn of the perils he has escaped despite the prophecy of Agabus and in answer to their increasing prayers. Thus ends Paul's last journey to Jerusalem. He must be thought of from now to the end of his days as first a Christian and then a Roman.



THE CRUCIFIXION OF PETER



## [TRANSLATION]

that he was a Roman citizen. Moreover, as I was anxious to understand the accusation they had against him, I took him down to their Sanhedrin. There I found that he was accused about matters of their law and that there was nothing charged against him deserving death or imprisonment. Now, however, I have learned of a plot against the man, so I send him on to you at once, while I also notify his accusers to plead their case against him before you.

“Farewell.”

**Paragraph 5. THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND TRANSFER TO CÆSAREA. Verses 31-35.**

The soldiers, according to their orders, took Paul and conducted him by night as far as Antipatris. The next day they returned to the castle, leaving the troopers to proceed with him. They arrived at Cæsarea, delivered the letter to the Governor and also presented Paul before him. After reading the letter he asked what class of province he was from, and learning it was Cilicia, he said,

“I will give full hearing to your case whenever your accusers also have arrived.” Then he ordered him to be kept in Herod’s prætorium.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE ARRAIGNMENT BEFORE FELIX, THE PROCURATOR

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE ACCUSATION BY ANANIAS AND TERTULLUS. Verses 1-9.**

The High Priest paid Paul a great compliment by making this journey of nearly seventy miles to press the case in person. But we recall the fact that the issue involved was partly personal. He brought quite a retinue of elders and others, among them a Roman pleader of oratorical gifts, to present the case in due civil form. Tertullus began by a great flourish of barefaced flattery in true court fashion. When he reached the case he alleged three charges: First, that of sedition—a strong count if only it were half true; second, that of heresy—not so serious before a Roman court; religious sects were too common to be occasions of serious inquiry, especially in the eastern provinces; third, that of profanation of the Temple—this, again, if properly pleaded and proved, could be a matter of great embarrassment to the defense. For evidence, he presented the unanimous testimony of the interested parties bringing the case, and failed to refer to any other as necessary. Paul, being a born advocate and a genius for legal pleading, makes his own defense. He never appears to be concerned in any way about properly or effectively putting his cases into persuasive form either before ecclesiastical or civil courts, and there is no record of his ever failing to more than match his accusers.

#### **Paragraph 2. PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE FELIX. Verses 10-21.**

The Procurator indicates that Paul may speak. He too speaks in complimentary terms of introduction but with respect for facts. Proceeding to specific answer to the charges of Tertullus, he asserts that he has been in the country for less than two weeks and that all of that time has been spent in going to Jerusalem to observe

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE ARRAIGNMENT BEFORE FELIX, THE PROCURATOR

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE ACCUSATION BY ANANIAS AND  
TERTULLUS. Verses 1-9.**

Five days later Ananias, the High Priest, came down with some elders and an advocate by the name of Tertullus, and they presented the case to the Governor against Paul. So Paul was summoned and Tertullus opened the case for the prosecution.

"We owe it to you, most noble Felix," he said, "that we are enjoying profound peace. Moreover, we owe it to your foresight that this nation is constantly securing reforms, and we acknowledge them with deep gratitude in all particulars and everywhere. However, not to detain you further, I crave that you will hear a brief statement from us with your wonted clemency. For, to speak plainly, we have found this man here a real pest and a disturber of the peace among all the Jews the world over and ringleader of the Nazarene heretics. Why, even our Temple he attempted to desecrate, but we apprehended him. Now, if you will examine him yourself, you will be able to find out the facts about all these charges which we allege against him."

The Jews also kept joining in, declaring that these were the facts.

Then Paul, at a nod from the Governor to speak, made his answer.

## [COMMENTARY]

the national feast of Pentecost. As for sedition, he had not even once spoken in public nor held any discussion either in synagogues or Temple courts. Where is the evidence to the contrary?

Replying to the charge of heresy, Paul admits that on strictly technical grounds he is a Nazarene, but he is not aware that this is any crime nor misdemeanor. He and his fellow believers of the new Way, as it is known, hold even more closely than orthodox Jews to the sanctity of the divine oracles, both law and prophets, and are convinced that what these hold out as the hope of Israel has come to fulfillment.

As to profanation, that were plainly impossible in his case, who, after an enforced absence of years, so longed for the advantage of again enjoying worship in the Temple that he had been preparing for months to reach there. At the same time one who so desired to show respect for his people and the Temple service that he had brought large sums of money for charitable gifts and offerings, could not be indifferent to the sanctities of that Holy Place. Why, at the very moment of his arrest he was in process of fulfilling acts of purification in connection with Nazarite vows, when some Jews from Asia, mistaking one of his company for a Gentile, charged him with favoring and abetting this crime. Again he asks for the evidence. "Why are not witnesses of these alleged facts present?"

The fact is that not even in the examination the day following in Jerusalem was one of these charges substantiated.

"The only basis of all this inquiry and prosecution is an utterance I made in clear terms of my belief in the resurrection of the dead and final judgment of the just and unjust."

Nothing on record shows Paul's art and capacity before a court of inquiry like this defense. Its very brevity and restraint, its open candor and quiet consciousness of utter innocence, and its masterly and pointed reply to each specification simply leave nothing for the prosecution to stand on.

### Paragraph 3. JUDGMENT STAYED AND FURTHER HEARING. Verses 22-27.

Felix was one of the least noble of all the ignoble rulers that cursed Palestine during the days of the Cæsars, but he had a shrewd and level head. He knew the Way if he did not walk in it, and he knew a great man when he saw him, and he rather liked

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 2. PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE FELIX. Verses 10-21.**

"As I well know that for many years you have administered justice to this nation, I am the more willing to make my own defense, for you can easily learn that it is not over ten days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship, and they never found me either arguing with any-one in the Temple or gathering a crowd in the synagogue or about the city. Nor can they substantiate by proof the charges they are now laying against me. I do, however, confess this fact to you, that I worship the God of our Fathers, according to a way which they call heresy. But I believe everything that is in accord with the law and written in the prophets; I have the same hope in God which these themselves also accept—that there is going to be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. On this account I also earnestly try to keep a clear conscience at all times before God and man.

"Now, after several years absence, I came back to bring charitable gifts to my nation and make offerings. In presenting these they found me purified in the Temple. I was neither involved in any mob nor uproar, but the real occasion was some Jews from the Province Asia who ought to have been here before you and made their charge, if they had anything against me, or else let these men here say what wrong they found me guilty of, when I stood before the Sanhedrin, except it was because of this one utterance which I made as I stood among them and said, 'It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am being tried before you to-day.'"



## [COMMENTARY]

to see him frequently. He adjourned the case, reserving decision until he had heard anything which Lysias might wish to present. Thus he saved the face of Ananias and the elders. Of course Lysias was never summoned, and as far as Lysias was concerned the case was over.

Paul strongly appealed to Felix, and he favored him with unusual attention. First, he ordered him to be shown every license in keeping with his formal imprisonment. His friends—and they were many and influential in Cæsarea—were to be allowed free access to him, and in case he were outwardly treated as a prisoner of state, going chained to his guard, he might go about the city at will. Soon the Procurator, whose wife, Drusilla, was a Jewess, paid Paul a sort of semi-social visit at the palace of Herod. They wished to hear about this new faith—especially no doubt about the cures and miracles which were reputed to be a part of its proof. Drusilla's father, Herod Agrippa I, had been favored by Rome with power beyond his predecessors of that house, and yet had perished miserably, as we have seen at the end of chapter xii, right here in this palace. Though Felix was over sixty, Drusilla was still young in years, but, like him, needed all the curative attentions available, and quite possibly they were not a little interested in the fact that Paul had as close companion a well-reputed physician of Greek training.

Paul saw beneath the surface and with exquisite tact yet ruthless plainness diagnosed the cases while Luke looked on and took notes. This new faith in Christ, who was verily the Jewish Messiah, as he first proved, was one of self-sacrifice. This was the key to His character as they would remember—one whole life of sacrifice, even to crucifixion—but it was the proof of His uniqueness and, indeed, divinity. No other god laid aside his power in order to save men by serving them. And that Jesus was God abundant proofs were given, chiefly His resurrection after death. Now His nation as a whole found it difficult, because of their failure rightly to understand their own Prophets, to accept Christ's claims to Messianic power before they had rejected and slain Him, but thousands of them since He rose again had come to see their error and had repented and had been forgiven, and had come to receive a joy and sense of peace in their hearts which lifted them above every physical ill, which flooded their Scriptures with the deepest meaning, and which made their lives under any and all conditions but a preparation for that Kingdom which is to be

## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 3.** JUDGMENT STAYED AND FURTHER HEARING. Verses 22-27.

Then Felix adjourned the case, for he had a very satisfactory understanding about the Way, and he said,

"When Lysias the Commander comes down, I will give my decision in your case."

He gave orders to the centurion to hold Paul in custody, but to grant him some liberty, and to prevent none of his personal friends from rendering any kindness to him.

Now, some days later, Felix came over with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He summoned Paul and heard him tell of faith in Christ Jesus, but while he was arguing about morality, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix, stirred with alarm, said:

## [COMMENTARY]

spiritual and eternal and in which every believer—Hebrew, Roman, Greek, even barbarian—was to share in intimate fellowship with his Sovereign Lord. No doubt Paul told of his own erroneous views and the experience which made him slave of Jesus Christ. Felix was deeply stirred; even Drusilla liked the preacher's fervor. Paul now tries to turn their interest inward—right living, standards of integrity in keeping with law as such, Mosaic or Roman; continence, self-control; the untried method and real root of happiness—giving to others instead of always seeking good for oneself. This last was so peculiar to Jesus that to learn it was at once to lift the life into the most intimate understanding of His mission and the new Way. Then, finally, it was deeply true, nothing could be surer: this Christ was God, His will must prevail; the laws of equity laid by Moses should at last be laid alongside every life and justice and judgment be meted out; the throne had to be maintained or the universe would sink into night. Sin must be overthrown and would be overthrown. There was to be resurrection

## [COMMENTARY]

both of the just and unjust and a judgment, when the thoughts and intents of all hearts should be disclosed.

Felix shuddered. He drew his cloak about his shoulders. He found himself almost in a chill. Drusilla never blanched, but she was ready to withdraw. The Procurator thanked the prisoner and promised to have him over at his court and hear him further. Luke says he kept his promise, sending often and becoming almost intimate with Paul, not, however, from the best of motives, until suddenly he is cited to a judgment which ends his career. He failed to release Paul, thinking thereby to soften the censures which his Jewish accusers now heaped upon him.

## [TRANSLATION]

"For the present you may retire. When I can spare a convenient moment I will send for you again."

At the same time he was hoping that Paul would give him a bribe; for this reason he used to send for him more frequently and talk with him. When, however, two full years had passed Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and as he was anxious to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul still a prisoner.

## CHAPTER XXV

### PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE FESTUS

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE PLOT TO GET THE CASE REMANDED TO JERUSALEM. Verses 1-6.**

It is now midsummer of the year 59. Festus arrives from Rome and almost at once proceeds to Jerusalem, as always the real center of the life of Palestine. Of course the high prelates of the nation are his chief entertainers and guests, and they decide to make Paul's case a prime subject of settlement by fair means or foul. They discuss the case openly and on its merits in the presence of the Procurator and absence of the defendant, and finally make it a point of special favor that it be cited back to their own Council for trial and final disposition. The plot to have Paul's blood will not die. It would almost seem that their persistence in pleading aroused the suspicions of Festus. At least he gathered that the case was of considerable importance and that he ought personally to inquire into it, and if so, that it would be better to have the trial take place at Cæsarea, especially as he did not propose to stop long enough at Jerusalem to give it attention there. The conspirators, of course, consented, hoping to have their favor granted from Cæsarea and to carry out their plot still. They therefore sent down a commission to press the petition, taking for granted that the real trial when the case was argued anew would be as they desired. Thus they failed to organize a strong presentation of their side, and it worked inevitably to their disadvantage. Festus's character and business capacity come out by the tokens of vigor and address with which he opens his administration. The very first day of his residence at the palace in Cæsarea sees Paul led into court for another legal examination.

#### **Paragraph 2. PAUL'S APPEAL TO THE EMPEROR. Verses 7-12.**

In striking contrast to the former hearing, no orator now opens the case for the prosecution, but the whole group of Jewish com-



PAUL PLEADING WITH HIS CENTURION



## CHAPTER XXV

### PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE FESTUS

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE PLOT TO GET THE CASE REMANDED TO JERUSALEM. Verses 1-6.**

Now, Festus, three days after he had come into his province, went up from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. Then the High Priests and leading men of the Jews informed him against Paul and besought him as a special favor and in prejudice against him to have Paul brought to Jerusalem, they meanwhile forming a plot to kill him on the road. But Festus, on the contrary, replied that Paul was being held in custody in Cæsarea and that he himself was in haste to proceed there.

"Let, therefore," he said, "your influential men who can, go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, impeach him."

After remaining with them not more than eight or ten days he went down to Cæsarea. The very next day he took his place on the bench and ordered Paul to be brought before him.

**Paragraph 2. PAUL'S APPEAL TO THE EMPEROR. Verses 7-12.**

When Paul arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem rose up on all sides of him and raised a number of grave charges against him, none of which they could prove. Paul answered, in defense,

"I have not trespassed in any respect against the law



## [COMMENTARY]

missioners spring to the floor as soon as Paul enters the hall and rushing to the front surround him with almost threatening aspect and gestures. Meanwhile they all pour forth a stream of the most serious charges partly addressed to the court and partly to the prisoner without any decency or order and without deigning to offer the slightest legal evidence. Paul, when at length his accusers have run out of further power of enlargement and perhaps begin to realize that they have done their cause more harm than good—for they really were sent down not to argue the case but to get it remanded to Jerusalem—makes a dignified and all-inclusive reply. With no heat nor elaboration nor argument he denies any guilt whatever on the three counts which had been pleaded at the first hearing.

"If, your Excellency, these men are intending to charge me with either infracting in any criminal way the laws of the empire, of the Jewish people, or of the Temple, I plead again not guilty."

"Are you willing to have the case referred back to Jerusalem in case I go up to the hearing?" asks Festus.

"This is the seat of civil government, your Excellency, and this is a civil case," replies Paul. "If I am a criminal let it be proved, and I will abide the consequences, even to death. But this method of charging all the language will bear and without any semblance of legal proof, such as promises to be the case if referred to a lower court, cannot satisfy a Roman citizen. I appeal to the Emperor."

Thus again their overconfidence has overshot the mark, and instead of getting Paul back into their own power they have so maneuvered that he will now be covered by the very shield of all-powerful Rome. Festus holds brief council with his state's attorneys to see that no legal form is overlooked and that he has their advice that the case will warrant sending up to the supreme tribunal, and, on assurance to that end, asks,

"Do you appeal to Cæsar?"

Paul courteously and gravely nods assent.

"To Cæsar you shall go!" says Festus. At last Paul shall "see Rome also."

### Paragraph 3. THE INTEREST OF HEROD AGRIPPA II IN THE CASE. Verses 13-22.

Luke is right in making Paul the hero of his book. We see by this time how extremely interesting and at the same time important

## [TRANSLATION]

of the Jews, nor against the Temple, nor against Cæsar."

Festus, however, since he wished to gain favor with the Jews, asked Paul,

"Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there stand trial before me on these charges?"

"I am standing before Cæsar's tribunal," said Paul, "and there I must be tried. I have done no wrong at all to the Jews, as you also can see better than ever. If, however, I am a criminal or have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die. But if there is nothing in any of the charges they lay against me, then no one can hand me over as a favor to them. I appeal to Cæsar!"

Then Festus, after conference with the Council, replied:

"Do you appeal to Cæsar? To Cæsar you shall go."

**Paragraph 3. THE INTEREST OF HEROD AGRIPPA II IN THE CASE. Verses 13-22.**

Some days later Agrippa, the king, and Bernice came down to Cæsarea to pay their respects to Festus. As they prolonged their stay there, Festus laid Paul's case before the king.

"There is a man here," he said, "left a prisoner by Felix. When I was in Jerusalem, the High Priests and the elders of the Jews made charges and begged me to

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[COMMENTARY]

are the episodes detailed by his master hand. No matter how many times he repeats the same incident in Paul's career, it sparkles anew, as new facets are inevitably turned upon us. No matter though the same inevitable conflict is sure to rise every time he goes into a

## [COMMENTARY]

Jewish synagogue and is asked to speak, yet it draws us on and chains our attention as breathlessly the fifth as the first time. Luke had a great portrait to draw and at the same time Paul had a great painter to limn his likeness. Now another of those splendid Herods comes across the stage, and he is just as vile as the rest. Yet Bernice, being both his sister and his wife, is, if possible, worse. They come down from Cæsarea Philippi to Cæsarea Palestinæ to greet the new Procurator and his wife. One day Festus narrates the case and character of Paul to get an opinion from his guest on how to frame the document remitting his prisoner to Rome. He rehearses it in even fuller detail than Luke has already given, and so strangely does it strike the king that no sooner is Festus through than Agrippa says:

"You have awakened my interest in the man. He must be a unique fellow, one of those Nazarene fanatics as you say, but what fiber is developed by that new sect! Do you remember the story we are always hearing about John the Baptizer and the Nazarene Himself? I think I heard of this Paul somewhere, it may be at Damascus or Antioch. Before we go let me see him and hear him speak and afterward I will help you with the paper."

"An excellent idea," answers Festus. "To-morrow is a holiday, and we will set a hearing in the Prætorium for the afternoon. He is a very interesting speaker, and we will make something of a spectacle of the occasion."

#### Paragraph 4. FESTUS REOPENS THE CASE WITH A FORMAL ADDRESS. Verses 23-27.

Festus orders attendance for the day following of a very brilliant assembly, and enters into it himself with great enthusiasm. When we recall that this case of Paul has repeatedly been prominent in the eye and court of Cæsarea for two years past, and then read Luke's account of this last day's doings, we get some suggestion of what a subtle personality the Gentile Apostle had. Festus begins the business with a rehearsal of the case in outline and openly states his dilemma and doubt as to whether it ought to go to the Emperor at all. By the Jews both in Cæsarea and Jerusalem the prisoner is claimed to be unworthy of life.

"My predecessor, I am told, liked the man and would gladly have freed him, had not the charges been so grave, but he himself

## [TRANSLATION]

give sentence against him. I, however, told them that it was not the custom among Romans to give any man up as a favor before the accused met his accusers face to face and had a chance to defend himself against the charges brought against him. When, therefore, they came here along with me I made no delay, but the next day took my seat on the bench and ordered the man to be brought in. But when his accusers came forward they did not charge him with any such offenses as I supposed, but the accusations against him were about matters of their own religion and about a certain Jesus who had died. Paul maintained that He was alive. As I was at a loss how to take up these matters, I asked if he were willing to go to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges. But Paul made appeal to have his case held for the decision of the Emperor; therefore, I ordered him to be held in custody until I could send him up to Cæsar."

"I have been wishing to hear the man myself," said Agrippa.

"You shall hear him to-morrow," Festus replied.

**Paragraph 4. FESTUS REOPENS THE CASE WITH A FORMAL ADDRESS. Verses 23-27.**

So on the following day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp and entered the audience chamber with the Tribune and chief men of the city, by the command of Festus, Paul was led in.

"King Agrippa," said Festus, "and all who are assembled with us, you are looking on a man about whom the entire body of Jews at Jerusalem and here also have made complaint to me. They loudly protest that he ought not

## [COMMENTARY]

did not believe them. I have carefully gone into the case and can find no real cause for criminal action. But as this man is a Roman citizen and has appealed to Rome, I have so ordered, and now I am at a loss how to state the case strongly enough to warrant the expense and attention which such matters generally involve. I shall be extremely grateful if you would give attention to the facts as they come out and afterward your judgment, and yours especially, King Agrippa, since you have lived much in Rome and sat at times in the imperial law courts when notable cases were passed upon."

## [TRANSLATION]

to live any longer. I, however, could not find that he had done anything deserving death, and as he himself appealed to the Emperor, I have decided to send him. But I have nothing to write the Sovereign that is definite about the case. Therefore, I have brought him before you all and especially before you, King Agrippa, that I may have something to write after this examination. For it seems unreasonable to me in sending forward a prisoner not to signify the particulars against him."

## CHAPTER XXVI

### PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE AGRIPPA

[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. THE PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF PAUL. Verses 1-5.**

Agrippa, as higher in rank than the Procurator, now assumes authority in a sort of self-conscious way as he says,

"You are permitted by my favor to speak."

Paul has been standing in respectful silence during the introduction by Festus, and now takes a step forward, sweeps a salutation to the king with his hand, and begins. He compliments Agrippa II with candor and grace as having interest and special insight with respect to Jewish problems and customs. This was true of all the Herods, but especially of this one, who besides being granted by the Emperor the title of king, was given the power to appoint the Jewish High Priests, and exercised this power without any regard save to his own ends. Paul refers to his indictment as brought by Jews, not "the Jews" as by the nation, but by some Jews, implying by not employing the article that Herod will understand their relative insignificance and unrepresentative character. He then gives a brief reference narrative of his life from boyhood as passed in the strictest tutelage of Pharisaic circles and as, therefore, shaping his ideas and tendencies along lines of the most prejudiced and narrow kind. Thus he lays a broad basis for showing how impossible it was that he should have changed his whole tendency and habit of thought without the most compelling reasons.

#### **Paragraph 2. THE PREACHING OF THE RESURRECTION THE CHIEF OFFENSE. Verses 6-11.**

Now he leaps to the chief issue, namely, his causing such offense to Jews whenever he proclaimed the doctrine of a resurrection of the dead. Again the article is not prefixed to "Jews" and thus he adds force to his surprise that Jews as such and as over against Gentiles should be so untrue to their peculiar heritage of hope as

## CHAPTER XXVI

### PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE AGRIPPA

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. THE PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF PAUL.**  
Verses 1-5.

Then Agrippa said to Paul,

"You are permitted to speak in your own behalf."

Paul thereupon stretched forth his hand and began his defense:

"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you to-day respecting all the accusations made against me by Jews, especially since you are well versed in all Jewish customs and questions. I pray you, therefore, hear me patiently. Now, my life from youth up was among my own nation and in Jerusalem. This all Jews know, and they have known from the first, if they would but testify, that I lived as a Pharisee in accordance with the strictest sect of our religion."

**Paragraph 2. THE PREACHING OF THE RESURRECTION  
THE CHIEF OFFENSE. Verses 6-11.**

"Even to-day I stand here charged as a criminal for my hope in the promise made by God to our forefathers—the promise which our twelve tribes hope to attain while earnestly serving God night and day. For this hope, O King, I am criminally indicted by Jews. Why is it judged unbelievable by you all if God raises the dead to life?



## [COMMENTARY]

respects the future life. Disbelief in such a doctrine might be expected of heathen, but of Jews, who had the promises from time immemorial and the hope fully fledged from the days of Enoch, such skepticism as was shown in persistently refusing to accept the teaching was astounding. Yet there he stood in chains for teaching that truth. Everywhere there seemed to be a conspiracy of madness and senseless opposition to the idea even that God, who created man from the dust, should call him back again from the grave. Yet Paul himself was compelled to confess in all honesty that he had sinned just as inexcusably and against light just as clear. In all humility he had to acknowledge that his own case was even worse. When these Nazarenes became too notorious in Jerusalem he was so roused by his deep prejudices against irregularity and the very name "Jesus from Nazareth" that he bent all his powers as a rising rabbi and councilor to suppress the sect. He consented to their martyrdom in case nothing short of that should end them, and many a time he threw the most beautiful souls on earth, both men and women, into dungeons if possible to rid them thereby of their obsession for the name of Jesus. When this did not suffice he tortured them and hounded them out of the city, and then pursued them with warrants of arrest and dragged them back in chains, in his madness by all means to exterminate them.

**Paragraph 3. A SKETCH OF HIS OWN CONVERSION.****Verses 12-18.**

"It was on my last journey of this sort, O King Agrippa," continued Paul, "when I was pushing my beast to his utmost to reach Damascus by noon one day, that an event occurred which became the turning point in my career. I had a considerable company of strong men about me, and was furnished with explicit warrants and orders from the High Priest to arrest and drag back to prison a group of refugees who had escaped to the purlieus of that great city which you so well know. Suddenly a burst of the most brilliant light flashed across our path and our mounts stopped so quickly that we were thrown heavily to the ground. In my soul a voice was heard, saying as clearly as though with audible lips,

"'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard to kick against goads.'

"I asked in reply,

## [TRANSLATION]

"In the same way, I myself once thought it my duty to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus, the Nazarene. I even did them in Jerusalem and shut up many of the saints in prison, receiving my authority from the High Priests, and when they were about to be put to death I gave my vote against them. Moreover, throughout all the synagogues I often punished them and tried to force them to blaspheme and I was so frantic in my fury against them that I used to pursue them even to foreign cities."

**Paragraph 3. A SKETCH OF HIS OWN CONVERSION.**  
Verses 12-18.

"I was traveling one day toward Damascus in these pursuits with authority and commission from the High Priests, when at midday, O King, I saw on the road a light from heaven, more brilliant than the sun, flash all about me and those in my party. We all fell to the ground; and I heard a voice which said to me in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against a goad."

"Who are you, Lord?" I asked.

"I am Jesus," said the Lord, "whom you are persecuting. But arise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for the very purpose of taking you into my service and making you a witness both to the things you have already seen of Me and to those in which I will yet appear to you. I will deliver you from your own people and from the Gentiles unto whom I am sending you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, so that

## [COMMENTARY]

"Who is it I am persecuting?" and the word came quick and clear,

"I am Jesus. You are persecuting Me!"

"Then I realized fully for the first time that His followers were right; that He was the Lord; and I yielded Him full and abject obedience from that moment. He said to me:

"Rise and receive My orders, for you must enter My service and join those who witness everywhere to My sovereignty and salvation. I will protect you from your own people, who will turn furiously against you, and I will keep you safely while I send you to spread the news of redemption among the Gentiles. This latter service will be your special and lifelong work."

**Paragraph 4. AN IMPASSIONED APPEAL DIRECT TO AGRIPPA. Verses 19-27.**

"Now, your Majesty, you see from this action here, which is only one of a long series of similar experiences since that day, that I have not proved recreant to my Master's commands. Quite the contrary. I began at once right there in Damascus to proclaim my change of mind and to narrate my heavenly vision, and to beg all men, whether Jew or Greek, to seek the same experience which had come to me. I returned in due time to Jerusalem and I went about Judæa, where I had been pursuing Nazarenes into their hiding places. I went to my boyhood home in Tarsus; in fact, I have been across sea and land in every Roman province this side of Italy itself, preaching this sole doctrine, namely, the fulfillment of Israel's hope in Jesus as their Messiah, the complete answer to all that Moses and the prophets proclaimed, who predicted that the Son of David should not be a temporal and national, local and earthly king, but a servant and lowly sufferer, a sacrifice and atonement. He should die as a malefactor, though supremely innocent, and then rise again from death and rise to Heaven as the Model and Hope, the Redeemer and Lord of Jew and Gentile, great and small, bond and free, rich and poor."

Festus could not endure such enthusiasm over so senseless a situation. We have already seen how hard and practical a mind he had, and he wearies under a speech which Agrippa apparently enjoys. At last he calls out:

"Paul, your head is turned. What with your visions and your

## [TRANSLATION]

they may receive remission of sins and a heritage among those who are sanctified through faith in Me.' ”

**Paragraph 4. AN IMPASSIONED APPEAL DIRECT TO AGRIPPA. Verses 19-27.**

“You see then, O King Agrippa, I did not disobey that heavenly vision, but, on the contrary, I began preaching, first to those at Damascus, and then to those at Jerusalem and through the whole of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn unto God, doing deeds worthy of their repentance. It was for this reason that some Jews seized me in the Temple and tried to kill me. Since, however, I obtained help from God, I have stood and stand to-day and testify both to small and great, declaring nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses predicted should take place, namely, that the Christ was to be a sufferer of death, and was then to be the first, by

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## [COMMENTARY]

reading of old prophecies and your speculations on a life after you are dead, you'll be mad soon.”

“Not so, my noble lord,” replied Paul. “These are not recent vagaries of my own. I have tested their truth now for twenty-five years. There is no claim I have advanced which cannot be proved from our Scriptures book after book. King Agrippa has no doubt read our prophets, as I have presumed all along, and thus sees how true my interpretation really is; for these facts are not obscure nor hidden from the knowledge of any man.”

Then Paul feels that he must not presume too far on Agrippa's sympathy, or, as some believe, that he sees in Agrippa a possible convert. So he exclaims,

“You believe the prophets, do you not, King Agrippa? Of course I need not ask the question.”

## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 5. AGRIPPA'S REPLY AND JUDGMENT OF PAUL'S INNOCENCE. Verses 28-32.**

Now Paul is compelled to stop. Even Agrippa cannot be catechized before so mixed an audience by a state's prisoner, especially on matters of personal belief. He could not answer truthfully that he believed the prophets in any sense comparable with Paul's high belief, and as Festus his host has plainly become anxious to end the hearing, he replies with half seriousness and a trifle of irony:

"At this rate you'll be saying in a moment I'm a Christian! You are persuaded I'm a believer like you in the Prophets; with a little more effort you'll reach the conviction I'm a believer in the Nazarene!"

Paul is distressed, but he answers, sincerely,

"I deeply wish that whether by little or larger effort I might persuade both your Majesty and all who are here present this day to become indeed Christians like myself—not, of course, including these chains." Thus with courtly courtesy, mingled with a touch of humor, Paul raises his manacled hands and says the last word.

With that Agrippa rises, then Festus, then Bernice, then the ladies and gentlemen of the court party. They assemble in the withdrawing room and discuss the situation, and one and all agree that, even if this man be an enthusiast, he certainly is not a criminal, and that no purer-minded or gentler soul had been seen in these parts, nor more courteous withal, than this Roman from Tarsus. Agrippa sums up his judgment in words which Festus reported to Paul:

"This man," he said, "could easily have been set free had he not persisted in his appeal to the Emperor."

This closes the series of five separate hearings recorded by Luke in these five chapters—xxii-xxvi—granted Paul by the Roman authorities in Palestine since his arrest in the Temple courts. It is noteworthy that in none of them have his enemies established his guilt of any crime which in Roman law was worthy of imprisonment, much less death. But as he had written to the Romans, "All things work out for good to them that love God," and as he wrote later from Rome, "the things which happened to me there fell out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel," so if we mistake not these Cæsarean experiences have a very necessary and refining effect upon the total character of the supreme apostle to the Gentile world.

## [TRANSLATION]

rising from the dead, to proclaim a gospel of life both to our nation and to the Gentiles."

As he was thus making his defense, Festus called out, loudly,

"You are mad, Paul! Your great learning is driving you into insanity."

"I am not mad, most noble Festus," said Paul, "but am speaking words of sober truth. For the king knows about these matters, and I am speaking to him without constraint. I do not believe that any of these things is obscure to him, for this has not happened in a corner. You believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know you believe them."

**Paragraph 5. AGRIPPA'S REPLY AND JUDGMENT OF PAUL'S INNOCENCE. Verses 28-32.**

"In a little while you will persuade yourself that you have made me a Christian," said Agrippa.

"I would to God," said Paul, "that whether in a little while or longer, not only you but all my hearers to-day, might become such as I am—except for these chains."

Then the King arose and the Governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. When they had withdrawn they discussed the case among themselves and agreed,

"This man is doing nothing for which death or imprisonment is proper punishment."

Moreover, Agrippa said to Festus,

"This man might have been discharged if he had not appealed to Cæsar."

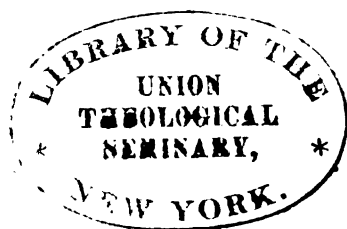
## CHAPTER XXVII

### PAUL'S VOYAGE AND SHIPWRECK ON MALTA

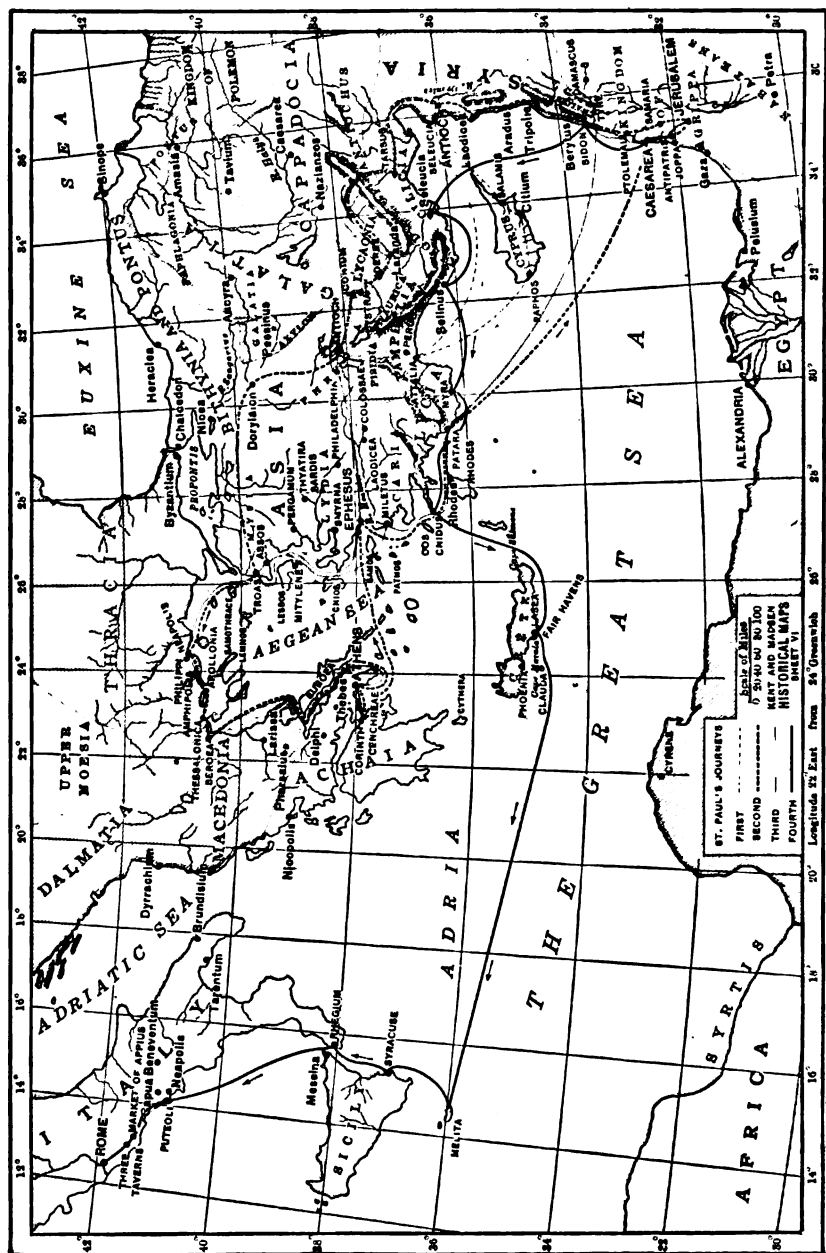
[COMMENTARY]

#### Paragraph 1. FROM CÆSAREA TO MYRA IN ASIA MINOR. Verses 1-5.

Over two years have been passed in Cæsarea. Of course they were not spent in vain waiting for release or advancement to Rome. Paul and Luke were actually engaged in learning all they could about and assisting in every way the neighboring Christians and any synagogues where Philip preached or his four daughters prophesied. It was not more than a day's journey to Nazareth, and Luke no doubt went there and gathered all the material he could find relative to the Saviour's life and family. He had not yet written his Gospel, but was beginning, even if unconsciously, preparations for it. It was easy in two days to reach Jerusalem, and here too Luke would find much of interest both to himself and Paul. Thus with intense application to reading, meditation, and prayer the time had been pleasantly and profitably spent. It is reasonable to think that Paul's health had not suffered during his imprisonment. Festus arranges to send Paul to Rome before winter, but he actually puts to sea too late. The centurion Julius, with other prisoners from the Levant, is planning to sail, and Paul is turned over to his charge, together with the documents necessary, Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica, well-known acquaintances and friends, being permitted to accompany him. This again looks as if he had ample means, as does his bearing on the voyage and the evident deference paid him on several occasions, besides the fact that on reaching Rome he was able to hire and reside in a house of considerable size. They embark on a coaster sailing from port to port along the entire Levant to the Dardanelles. It is thought very plausibly that in case they did not come at some point across a larger vessel sailing directly for Italy, Julius intended taking his prisoners—for there were some others—overland from Philippi to the Adriatic, crossing thence to Brundisium, and so on to Rome. The first stop was old Sidon, mother city of Phœnicia. Already







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# PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS AND VOYAGE TO ROME

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### PAUL'S VOYAGE AND SHIPWRECK ON MALTA

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1.** FROM CÆSAREA TO MYRA IN ASIA MINOR.  
Verses 1-5.

Now, as it was decided that we should sail for Italy, Paul, along with some other prisoners, was put in charge of a Captain of the Augustan regiment named Julius. So embarking on a ship of Adramyttium, bound for the ports of the Province Asia, we put to sea, a Macedonian, Aristarchus from Thessalonica, being with us. On the next day we put into Sidon, where Julius treated Paul very kindly, allowing him to visit his friends and accept their hospitality. Thence, putting to sea again, we made our course to the leeward of Cyprus, because of the unfavorable winds, and when we had sailed across the gulf lying off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we arrived at Myra in Lycia.

**Paragraph 2.** FROM MYRA TO FAIR HAVENS IN CRETE.  
Verses 6-12.

There Julius, finding an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, put us on board her. For a number of days we beat slowly to windward, and it was only with great difficulty we arrived off Cnidus, and, the wind being still unfavorable, we ran under the lee of Crete, rounding Cape Salmone, and, coasting along with difficulty, we arrived

## [COMMENTARY]

Paul has favorably impressed the centurion, and he is permitted shore leave while the cargo is attended to. Of course the Christian disciples profit greatly by his few hours ashore, and again we find a church which we had not known anything about. The next port is Myra, after beating up along the north coast of Cyprus and crossing the gulf to the mainland.

**Paragraph 2. FROM MYRA TO FAIR HAVENS IN CRETE.**  
Verses 6-12.

The centurion in charge finds in the harbor of Myra one of the great grain ships which was unusually late proceeding at once to Italy, and decides to transship his prisoners and take them on that way, hoping it would prove easier for him and much cheaper. They beat up the coast westward under lee of the highlands as far as Cnidus, on the last promontory of Asia Minor, and then ran down across the wind to Crete, and so again hugging the shore to Fair Havens, near the old city of Lasaea, midway of the south coast of the island. The north and northwesterly winds had blown steadily now for weeks and it was probably the middle of October, the Day of Atonement falling that year on the fifth of that month. It would seem from the record that Paul took the initiative here and advised Julius not to proceed farther. The centurion appears to have called the captain and sailing master also into conference and to have decided as the superior over them all the course of action. He wanted a comfortable table and place of entertainment for the winter and then a good harbor for the ship, and as Phœnix lay only forty miles further and had these advantages, the decision was to watch for a shift of the wind, however slight, round Cape Matala and make the distance of that short run by sheer seamanship. Paul was not inexperienced in those waters, and to this was added another sense which made his advice better than that which prevailed. He, however, was not presuming to press his convictions unduly at this time, and decided to await developments—his Pilot, in any case, was also on board.

**Paragraph 3. ACCOUNT OF THE FOURTEEN-DAY HURRICANE.** Verses 13-20.

The soft breeze which lured them out of their haven is but the precursor to an early winter hurricane. So suddenly burst the





SOUTH COAST OF CRETE

## [TRANSLATION]

at a place called Fair Havens not far from which was the city of Lasaea.

By this time the season was well advanced and navigation had become dangerous, for the Fast was already over. Therefore Paul began to warn them.

"Men," he said, "I see that our voyage is going to be made with damage and much loss, not alone of the cargo and the ship but even of our own lives."

Julius, however, gave more attention to the sailing master and the owner of the ship than to anything Paul said. Moreover, as the harbor was not adapted for wintering in, the majority were in favor of putting out to sea in the hope of reaching Phoenix to winter there.

**Paragraph 3. ACCOUNT OF THE FOURTEEN-DAY HURRICANE. Verses 13-20.**

Phoenix is a harbor of Crete, looking northeast and southeast. So when a moderate southerly breeze sprang up, thinking they had gained their object, they weighed anchor and began to sail along the coast of Crete close inshore.

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[COMMENTARY]

gale that they could not bring on board the tender nor furl the mainsail, but simply ran before the wind in its first fury, twenty-three miles to the lee of an islet lying in their course named Cauda. Here, under its cover for a little while, they managed to get in the boat and shorten sail quickly and prepare as best they could for the desperate drive which they must make again as soon as they get out to sea. Among the operations necessary was that of "frapping," for the seams had already begun to open. They skillfully slipped cables over the bow, allowing them to drift astern along the keel, then drawing them taut, kept the planks from working, and the ship finally foundering. As the gale was from

## [COMMENTARY]

the northeast, they were sure to drive on the African quicksands unless they carried considerable sail, and yet this endangered them only slightly less because of the strain on the mast. They therefore lowered every piece of gear that could be spared and lay to. Night shut down on them in possibly the most storm-tossed latitude of that treacherous sea. The Mediterranean under winter storms is terrible in the extreme. The first day out they begin to jettison the cargo, the second they throw overboard the spare gear and fittings of the ship. They begin to lose appetite and all hope. The seamen lose all reckoning, for day is almost as dark as night, and the nights have no stars. They look for death, and death seems looking for them.

**Paragraph 4. PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE SHIP'S COMPANY.****Verses 21-26.**

Paul and Aristarchus and Luke had meanwhile spent much time in prayer. They could not easily converse nor read, they could do nothing with their hands since they assisted at heaving the heaviest spars over the side, but they could pray, and now they could sing. They had had a quiet, deep assurance that somehow they should not perish, but now they knew that the large passenger list and the soldiers and the crew would escape. For these they had worked as best they could since leaving Myra, more than a month back, and had prayed unceasingly, and now the answer had come. Paul has seen another vision. Jehovah's angel has "stood by" his servant, and there need be no fear. He is to be saved to stand before Cæsar, and God grants his prayer for his shipmates. The morning following this Paul begins the day by gathering all he can amidships and telling the story. He cheers them up and calls for new hope and courage. They shall all be saved, though the ship be wrecked. They shall be cast on an island. The word spreads from lip to lip, and even the centurion and the ship's officers hear of it and discuss it for hours. To them he says that heed should have been given his warning at Fair Havens and thus the ship and cargo spared. It must be remembered that Paul had already suffered three experiences of shipwreck, and could refer to them as giving him some standing in the premises even apart from his vision. What he then foretold has taken place, and he is even more sure of the outcome now promised. All this confidence, however, comes, he assures them, from the faith for which he is a prisoner on that

## [TRANSLATION]

Before long, however, a terrific gale called Euraquilo (northeaster) struck down upon us from the land. The ship was carried out of her course and could not keep her head up to the wind, so we had to let her fall off and drive before it. Then, running under the lee of a little island named Cauda, with great difficulty we got the boat alongside, and after they had hoisted it on board they frapped the ship with supporting cables. Moreover, as they were afraid of being driven on the Syrtis quicksands, they shortened sail and lay to, drifting. The next day, as we were being violently tossed about, they began to throw the cargo overboard and the day following they threw over the ship's spare gear with their own hands. Now, when neither sun nor stars had been seen for many days, and the gale continued unabated, all hope of our being saved was finally taken away.

**Paragraph 4. PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE SHIP'S COMPANY.**

Verses 21-26.

Then after they had gone for a long time without food, Paul stood up among them and said:

"Alas, men, you should have listened to me and not sailed away from Crete and thus incurred this damage and loss. But now, I bid you to take courage, for there shall not be a single life lost among you, but the ship only. For there stood by me last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve, saying, 'Have no fear, Paul; you must appear before Cæsar, and as a mark of His favor to you, God has granted the lives of all sailing with you.' Therefore, men, take courage, for I believe God and I am confident that it will turn out exactly as I have been told, but we must be cast upon some island."



## [COMMENTARY]

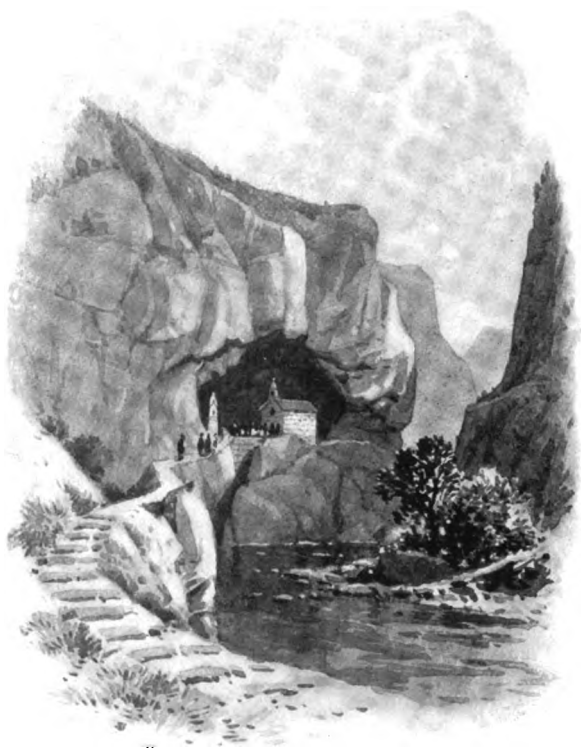
ship. He talks on now, for he has compelled attention. The storm is running out and there is nothing for the seamen to do but wait. He preaches Jesus and the new Way. He wins believers, as he has always done when he can get a hearing.

**Paragraph 5. DESPERATE MEASURES AS THEY APPROACH LAND. Verses 27-32.**

Adria was a name given in Paul's day to the waters lying south of the modern Adriatic, and Luke speaks of it thus in the record, written later, because they found themselves there when day broke. It is the night following Paul's announcement that they should be wrecked on an island. The sailors are huddled before the mast. They are keenly alert. The wind has dropped, though the sea runs high. Suddenly the boatswain calls for the lead. He is sure he has a whiff of a land breeze. He pays out the line to twenty fathoms. They are nearing some shore. In a few minutes he heaves it again and sounds fifteen fathoms. They are close in. They hear the breakers now, and some can see in the distance the gleam of white foam. The captain orders four anchors, one after another, out of the stern. They must not be driven upon the rocks, at least before daylight. Some desperate characters among the sailors, caring only for their own lives, and knowing that the boat would be at the command of the centurion and for the chief passengers, planned to get it over the side and escape to the shore. Their excuse is, when discovered, that the bow anchors could also be utilized if carried out to full cable's length. Paul is on deck and hears the parley. He says to the centurion that all must stay by the ship or many will be lost. Paul's word now is recognized as one of authority. Julius orders his soldiers to cut her adrift and the boat falls into the sea. Rather a desperate thing to do, seeing that they had no other tender, and indicating both Paul's hold on the man and the sinister character of those in the plot. Paul sees that he has standing on the ship and at once assumes chief command.

**Paragraph 6. PAUL TAKES COMMAND AND SAVES ALL ON BOARD. Verses 33-44.**

Dawn now draws on. The coming day will tax every fiber of their remaining strength. Paul asks for food; he tells Julius and the officers to order it for everyone on board and goes about cheerily urging those who are indifferent and half sick to eat.



PAUL'S GROTTO—MALTA



## [TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 5. DESPERATE MEASURES AS THEY APPROACH LAND. Verses 27-32.**

Now, the fourteenth night had arrived and we were drifting about in the sea of Adria, when about midnight the sailors began to suspect that we were nearing land, so they sounded, found twenty fathoms, and after a little they sounded again and found fifteen fathoms. Then, fearing that we might be wrecked on the rocks, they let go four anchors from the stern and kept longing for daylight. The sailors, however, began to try to escape from the ship, and had lowered the boat on pretext of carrying out anchors from the bow. But Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay by the ship you cannot be saved."

Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and let her fall off.

**Paragraph 6. PAUL TAKES COMMAND AND SAVES ALL ON BOARD. Verses 33-44.**

Then, as day was coming on, Paul kept urging them all to take food.

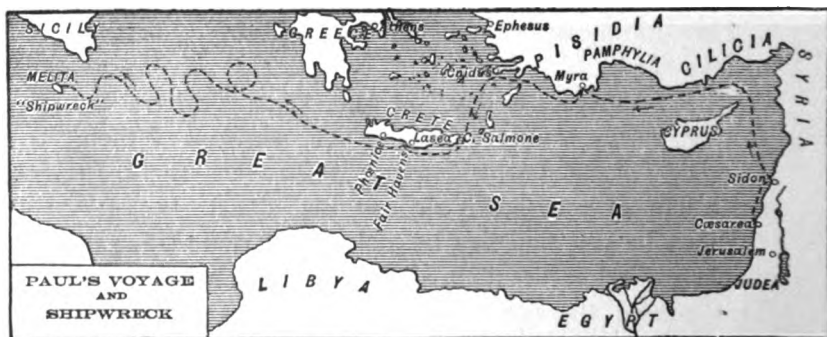
"It is two weeks to-day," he said, "that you have kept fasting, hardly eating a thing in your anxiety. I therefore beg you, take some food; it is for your safety, for not a hair of your heads shall perish."

When he had said this he took a loaf of bread, gave thanks to God before them all, broke it, and began to eat. This roused the courage of all, and they themselves began to eat. All told there were two hundred and seventy-six souls of us on board. So when they had taken their fill they began to lighten the ship by throwing

## [COMMENTARY]

"Remember," he says, "none of us is to be lost. Eat heartily; we are near the end of our voyage in this ship. Eat all you can."

Then he goes a little apart with his comrades and a number of recent believers, breaks the loaf, gives thanks to God, and begins a hearty meal with the token of brotherly love, and they share the cup and loaf and the viands now freely brought out. The entire company catches the infection—two hundred and seventy-six souls as good as saved from the deep. Few ever forgot that meal, and we can believe that few ever forgot their friend, the citizen of no mean city. Now, Julius, convinced that the ship is doomed, orders the rest of the cargo thrown overboard, intending to beach her. When all is made ready they cut her loose, raise sail, and steer for an inlet with a sandy beach. They strike fast, however, on a hidden ledge, and the sea begins to break over the stern and smash it in. Confusion breaks out and the soldiers, without orders from Julius, plan to kill the prisoners. The centurion gets knowledge of it just in time to prevent any actual slaughter, orders all to be set free and save themselves, first those who are able to swim, and then, with various objects to keep them afloat, the rest, and thus, as Paul had predicted, all reach the shore in safety. The fine way in which Julius managed to protect Paul, as he thought, from death must not be overlooked.



## [TRANSLATION]

out the wheat into the sea. When day began to break they could not recognize the land, but they made out an inlet with a sandy beach, on which they resolved to see if they could beach the ship. So they cut away the anchors and left them in the sea; at the same time they unlashd the steering oars, hoisted the foresail to the wind, and were making for the beach, but, striking a reef, they ran the ship aground and her bow stuck fast and could not be moved, while the stern began to break up under the pounding of the waves. Now, the soldiers formed a plan to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim off and escape. But the officer, wishing to save Paul, put a stop to this project and ordered those that could swim to throw themselves overboard first and get to land, while the rest should follow, some on planks and some on wreckage of the ship. In this way, it turned out that all got safely to shore.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### FURTHER JOURNEY FROM MALTA TO ROME

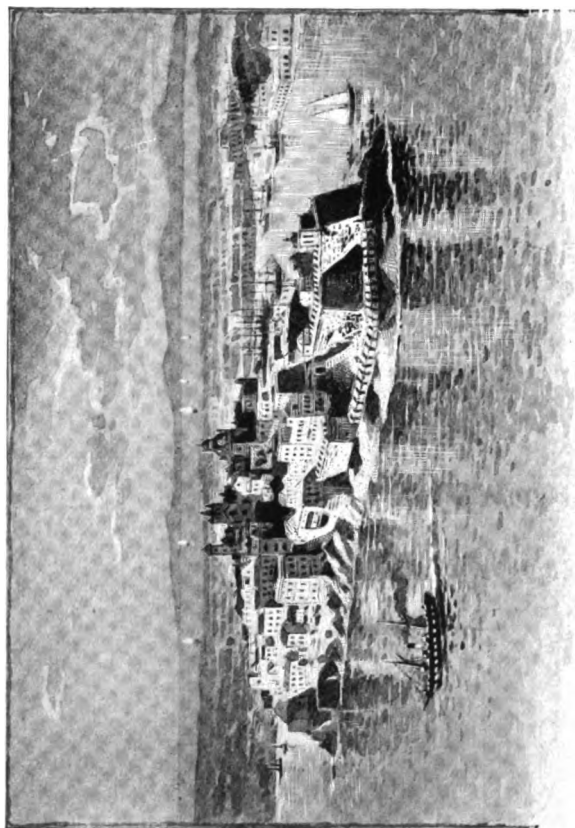
[COMMENTARY]

#### **Paragraph 1. WINTER ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA.** Verses 1-10.

Luke's last chapter maintains the interest of his tale at top-notch to the end. The day of their landing, drenched and chilled, was one in which a cold rain was falling, but the islanders were very hospitable and did all they could to warm and cheer their guests from the wreck. A large fire is built, all foraging for bits of wood or fagots. The dormant viper—constrictor, says Ramsay—carelessly thrown on, roused by the heat, leaps upon Paul's hand and is quickly shaken off into the fire. The natives in superstition and terror look for deadly effects, and not seeing them, conclude Paul is not a murderer but a god. Of course he disabuses them of this idea as far as he can, though his further acts of a miraculous nature make the process difficult. The incident of further courtesy as extended to Paul by Publius and Paul's act of grace in healing the chief man's father gives the apostle great favor in the island, and leads to a great work not alone of outward physical philanthropy on his own part but of even greater spiritual seed-sowing, and in some cases, no doubt, immediate harvest. Thus for three months he and the two hundred and seventy-six refugees make the best of their forced residence on Malta. The throng of his fellow passengers could not fail to see that the amenities they were enjoying were largely due to Paul, and they no doubt deeply appreciated that fact. When at last they departed every token of love was showered upon the apostolic party by the grateful islanders.

#### **Paragraph 2. THE SPRING VOYAGE TO PUTEOLI. Verses** 11-14.

It seems that in the chief harbor of Malta, only a few miles from where Paul landed, there had wintered another Alexandrian



VALETTA, CHIEF CITY OF MALTA





## CHAPTER XXVIII

### FURTHER JOURNEY FROM MALTA TO ROME

[TRANSLATION]

**Paragraph 1. WINTER ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA.**  
Verses 1-10.

When we had thus found safety, we learned for the first time that the island was called Melita. Moreover, the natives showed us unusual kindness, for they made a fire and took us all under cover because of the driving rain and cold. Now, when Paul had collected a quantity of fagots and put them on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. Then, as the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they kept saying to each other:

"This man is surely a murderer! Even though he has escaped from the sea, justice will not let him live."

But he shook off the creature into the fire without the least harm. They, however, expected him soon to swell up or suddenly drop down dead, but when they had looked a long while and saw nothing out of the way happen to him they changed their minds, and they kept saying he was a god.

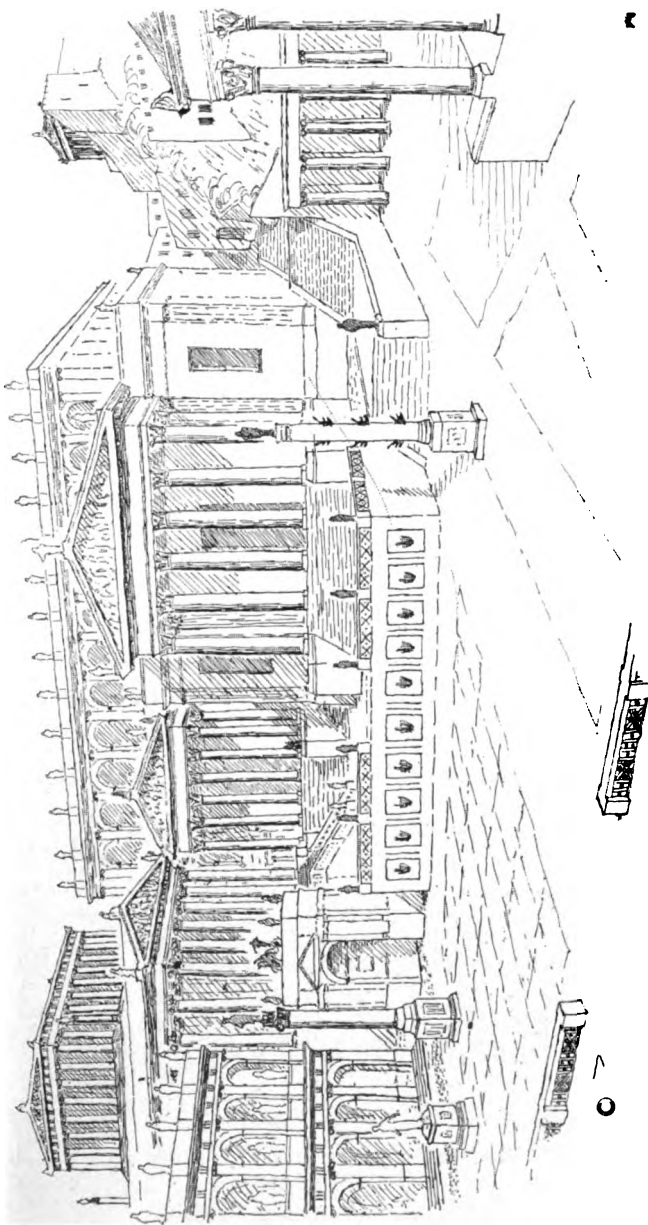
Now, in that very neighborhood there was an estate belonging to the Governor of the island, a man named Publius. He took us to his house and for three days hospitably kept us. As it happened, Publius's father was lying ill of fever and dysentery. Paul then went in to

## [COMMENTARY]

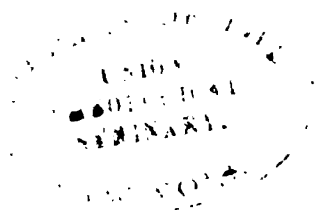
grain ship, which must have preceded the vessel of Julius by less than a month, else she would have reached Syracuse at least. Luke well remembers her figure head, as he often walked over to see her and speculate about her. Besides, she must have been unusually capacious to be able, besides her own complement of passengers, to take aboard this large company, and he seems to reflect a certain fondness for her. Sailing straight north, they put in at the beautiful and most important port of Sicily, and at Syracuse, for the first time since leaving Sidon, spend shore leave in a great imperial center where, no doubt, Christians were to be found. The tradition at Syracuse is that Paul founded the Christian church there at this time. After three days they make the run, not so easily, up to Rhegium, spend one day there, and a good wind springing up directly from the south again, they sweep past Scylla and Charybdis and on to Puteoli, one hundred and eighty miles further in two days. Here was a Christian congregation and a joyous welcome, and taking leave of the ship and the sea, they are permitted to visit their new friends for a full week. Across the bay, lay Neapolis and Pompeii, and there were also Christians there, as catacombs and inscriptions now prove.

**Paragraph 3. THE JOURNEY OVERLAND AND RECEPTION  
AT ROME. Verses 15, 16.**

The imperial officers on "Castor and Pollux" had sent the mail forward at once, so that the Christians at Rome were ready to receive their friend when he should come. They had been looking for him for over two years. A large group go south on the post road, part as far as to the market town, named after Appius, the builder of the road, over forty miles, and part stopping at a small village, The Three Taverns, thirteen miles nearer Rome. Their interest in Paul thus shown greatly cheered him and filled his heart with thanks to God that now all His pledges were on the point of fulfillment. Arrived at Rome, then and now the most fascinating city of the Mediterranean world, he is turned over by Julius to the Prætorian Prefect, and so favorable was his report that the courtesy was at once extended to Paul to choose his own place of residence, provided his guard be quartered with him, and thus at last he has settled down, after years of longing and anticipation, to "testify in Rome also" on behalf of the Name and the Way.



THE ROMAN FORUM, WESTERN END—RECONSTRUCTED. JUPITER CAPITOLINUS ABOVE ON LEFT—  
ARX, OR CITADEL, ON RIGHT WITH MAMERTINE PRISON BELOW



## [TRANSLATION]

see him, and after he had prayed laid his hands upon him and cured him. Thereupon the rest of the sick people in the island kept coming and being cured, and they showered us with honors, and when we were setting sail they put on board whatever we needed.

**Paragraph 2. THE SPRING VOYAGE TO PUTEOLI. Verses 11-14.**

Three months later we sailed off in a ship of Alexandria, with the Dioscuri (twin-brothers) for a figure head, which had wintered in the island. At Syracuse we put in and stayed three days. From there we tacked round to Rhegium, and the next day a south wind sprang up which drove us in two days to Puteoli. Here we found brothers, who asked us to stay a week with them, and thus we came on to Rome.

**Paragraph 3. THE JOURNEY OVERLAND AND RECEPTION AT ROME. Verses 15, 16.**

Meanwhile, the brothers there had heard about us and they came out to meet us as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns, and when Paul saw them he thanked God and took courage. Now when we arrived in Rome Paul obtained permission to live by himself together with the soldier who was guarding him.

**Paragraph 4. FINAL CONFERENCE WITH THE JEWS. Verses 17-29.**

Then, three days having elapsed, he called the leading Jews together and when they had assembled, he said to them:

## [COMMENTARY]

**Paragraph 4. FINAL CONFERENCE WITH THE JEWS.**  
**Verses 17-29.**

He plunges immediately into the business that is on his heart. The third day the chief members of the Jewish colony, apart from the Christians as such, accept his invitation for a conference at his house. He makes a carefully worded statement of the occasion of his presence as a prisoner of state in Rome under charges concerning which he presumes they have knowledge. He assures them of his innocence, as had repeatedly been established in court, and that he had been compelled to appeal to the Emperor solely to escape the persistent and really unfair stand of some who would at all costs make him trouble. He begs them to believe that he has no hard feelings against them or intention of seeking reprisals, that he is in deepest sympathy with his own people and ancestral faith, and that he hopes to show them there that the Hope of Israel which they are all looking for has in Jesus, their Lord and Master, truly come.

They reply very guardedly yet courteously that no word has reached them either by letter or from returning pilgrims concerning his case and express a wish to hear him more at length about his ideas relative to this new Way to which he has referred, for to them in Rome, as everywhere, it gives the impression of being an impossible solution of either their popular expectations or the true meaning of the Holy Writings. They, therefore, set a day which is agreeable to Paul and come again in larger numbers, giving an entire day to hear his views as he expounds the Law and the Prophets on the two great subjects they were written to reveal, namely, "The Nature of the Kingdom of God among Men" and "The Character and Function of Messiah and His Work." Discussion was prolonged into the evening. Some were convinced and others not. To these last he felt there was nothing he might further say except to remind them that it had always been so—some received and some rejected the Truth, and he quotes their greatest writer, Isaiah, as Jesus and others many times had done, showing that the Spirit had foreseen and clearly foretold this sad and universal fact. Moreover, he wished it clearly understood, as he had in part implied, and they must see is deeply taught in their Scriptures, that the Saviour and Messiah who came into the world through the Jews was to become Redeemer and King of all men, Gentiles as well as believing Jews, and that it looked as

## [TRANSLATION]

“Brother men, although I have done nothing against our people nor the customs of our fathers, I was handed over as a prisoner from Jerusalem to the Romans. They wished to release me after due examination, as they found no capital offense in me. When, however, the Jews kept objecting, I was forced to appeal unto Cæsar, but not because I had anything to charge against my own nation. It is on this account that I have asked to see you and talk it over with you, for it is really on account of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

And they replied to him:

“We have not received letters about you from Judæa, nor have any of the brothers reached here and circulated any bad report or tale about you. We will be glad to hear what your opinions are, but as for this sect, we well understand that there is opposition to it on all sides.”

Then, having arranged a day with him, they came in increased numbers to the place where he was staying, and he began to set the case before them. He gave his opinion as to the Kingdom and tried to persuade them from the law of Moses and from the Prophets, about Jesus, continuing from morning until evening. As a result some were convinced by his words; others, however, would not believe. So when they were not able to agree together they began to go away, but Paul added this parting word:

“Rightly spoke the Holy Spirit to your fathers through the prophet Isaiah:

“GO AND SAY TO THIS PEOPLE,

YOU SHALL EVER BE HEARING AND NEVER UNDER-  
STANDING;

YOU SHALL EVER BE SEEING AND NEVER PERCEIVING;



## [COMMENTARY]

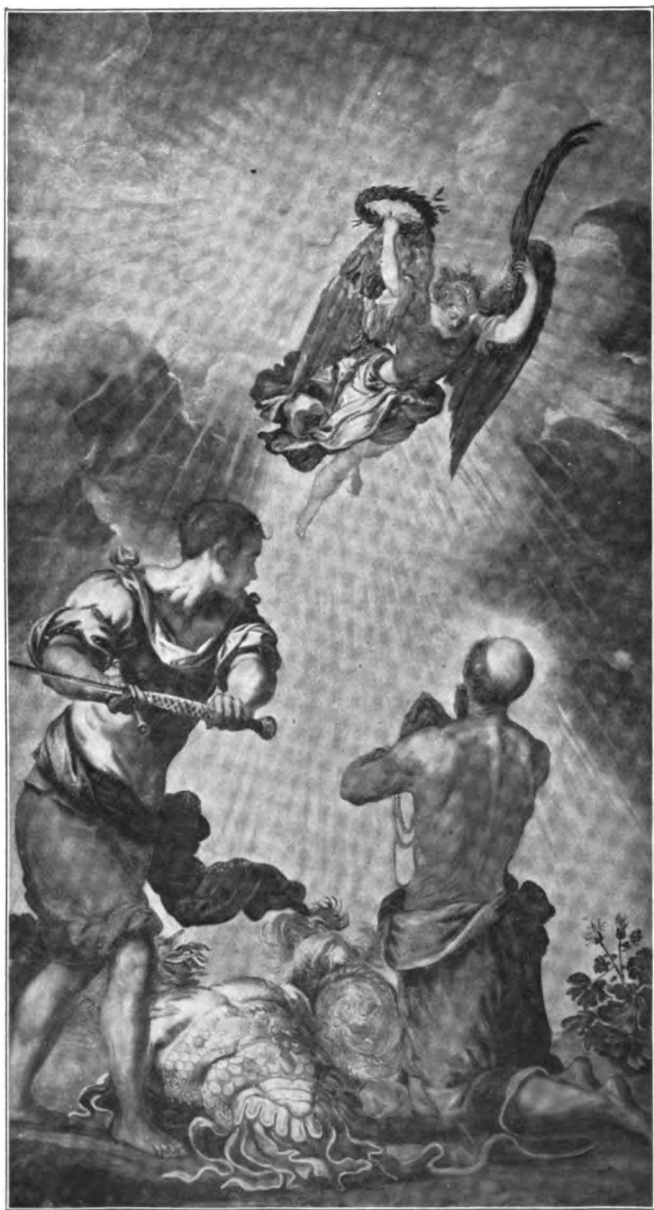
though the Gentiles would exceed the chosen people in appreciating this royal truth.

**Paragraph 5. TWO YEARS AN AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS.**

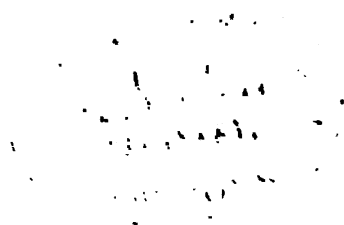
Verses 30, 31.

Luke's summary ending is a restrained shout of triumph:

Paul dwelt two whole years  
In his own hired house,  
Receiving all who would come,  
Proclaiming the Kingdom of God,  
Teaching in all confidence  
The things concerning Christ,  
All hindrances overcome,  
His chain a badge of protection.



THE MARTYRDOM OF PAUL



## [TRANSLATION]

FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME GROSS,  
THEIR HEARING HAS BECOME DULL,  
THEIR EYES HAVE BECOME CLOSED;  
LEST EVER THEY SHOULD PERCEIVE WITH THEIR EYES  
AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND  
WITH THEIR HEARTS,  
AND TURN AGAIN, AND I SHOULD CURE THEM'

(Isa. vi, 9, 10).

Therefore, let it be well understood that this salvation of our God has been sent to the Gentiles, and that they at least will listen to it" (verse 29 not in the Greek).

**Paragraph 5. TWO YEARS AN AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS.**

Verses 30, 31.

After this for two full years he kept living in his own hired house and receiving all who came to visit him, announcing the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all freedom of speech and no embarrassment.











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